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THE END OF THE CENTURY

BY EDWIN MARKHAM

Author of "The Man With the Hoe"

WE stand here at the end of mighty years,
And a great wonder rushes on the heart.
While cities rose and blossomed into dust,
While shadowy lines of kings were blown to air,—
What was the Purpose brooding on the world,
Through the large leisure of the centuries?
And what the end—failure or victory?

Lo, man has laid his sceptre on the stars,
And sent his spell upon the continents.
The heavens confess their secrets, and the stones,
Silent as God, publish their mystery.
Man calls the lightnings from their secret place
To crumple up the spaces of the world
And snatch the jewels from the flying hours.
The wild white smoking horses of the sea
Are startled by his thunders. The World-Powers
 Crowd round to be the lackeys of the king.
His hand has torn the veil of the Great Law,
The Law that was before the worlds—before
That far First Whisper on the ancient deep;
The Law that swings Arcturus on the North,
And hurls the soul of man upon the way.

But what avail, O builders of the world,
Unless ye build a safety for the soul?
Man has put harness on Leviathan,

And hooks in his incorrigible jaws;
 And yet the Perils of the Street remain.
 Out of the whirlwind of the cities rise
 Lean Hunger and the Worm of Misery,
 The heart-break and the cry of mortal tears.

But hark, the bugles blowing on the peaks!
 And hark a murmur as of many feet,
 The cry of captains, the divine alarm!
 Look, the last Son of Time comes hurrying on,
 The strong young Titan of Democracy!
 With swinging step he takes the open road,
 In love with the winds that beat his hairy breast.
 Baring his sunburnt strength to all the world,
 He casts his eyes around with Jovian glance—
 Searches the tracks of old Tradition; scans
 With rebel heart the Books of Pedigree;
 Peers into the face of Privilege and cries:
Why are you halting in the path of men?
Is it your shoulder bears the human load?
Do you draw down the rains of the sweet heaven?
And keep the green things growing? . . . Back to Hell!

We know at last the Future is secure:
 God is descending from Eternity,
 And all things, good and evil, build the road.
 Yea, down in the thick of things, the men of greed
 Are thumping the inhospitable clay.
 By wondrous toils the men without the Dream,
 Led onward by a Something unawares,
 Are laying the foundations of the Dream,
 The Kingdom of Fraternity foretold.

Be still, O soul: the Future is secure!
 For one is knocking at the gate of life,
 The Social Man, the ruler of the sphere.
 And in his brain he bears the Golden Law,
 And in his heart a music—in his feet
 The free unselfish service of the State.
 Hasten, O men, make ready with glad hands
 Chapels of worship, chambers of repose.
 Spread the white table of Fraternity:
 The high joy falters till the Great Guest comes!

THE WHISTLING MAID

BY ERNEST RHYS

Author of "The Fiddler of Carne," "Welsh Ballads," etc.

I.

LUNED AND GRINGOLET.

THE cool shade of the early May morning still lay about the old house in Rhos as Luned passed through the court-yard, —a slender figure in a green kirtle. A boy's leather cap was set lightly upon her head, which with one hand she pressed closer on her locks of yellow-brown hair; in the other hand she had a twisted leather thong and willow switch. Her kirtle was closely girdled with an old belt. When she neared the wicket in the high wall at the foot of the yard, her step quickened in her eagerness into a run.

As the quiet and empty stables showed, the men were away with their master; but she was afraid of being called back by one of the maids or her mother. Reaching the wicket safely however, and without waiting to let down the crazy ladder used to descend the six or seven feet to the ground below, she drew the gate to behind her and lightly, one hand on the wall, leaped down. A tall bed of rank nettles grew below, with but one narrow track leading through them and into the trees. Standing under the wall, she paused and whistled,—a long, clear note,—ere picking her way through the nettles, wet with last night's rain.

On reaching a little space of clean turf, she stopped and whistled again. In reply, a sound of light hoofs was heard from the trees, where one or two rough tracks, such as forest ponies make, could be traced in the brambles and underwood. But it was no forest-pony that came. Instead, a small graceful horse, like an Arab, his coat of ruddiest dark chestnut, came trotting out of the trees. He never stopped till within a couple of paces or so from her feet, dropping his pretty head till his long red mane partly fell over his bright eyes. But as her hand was about to touch him, he started, threw up his head again, and darted off along the border of the trees at a hand-gallop, his hoofs scattering the splashy rain-pools in a fine spray. However, he had not gone far when he wheeled about and came back.

Luned for her part stood there, stripping a thin ribbon of the bark from her switch, until he came and fairly thrust his nose into her

hands. Whereupon, in a trice, she slipped the rough bridle over his head, and, gathering up her skirts, sprang upon his bare back.

"Oh Gringolet!" she cried with a laugh of delight, as they set off, at a walk, a quiet trot, a canter, a gallop. They galloped down to the low water-side, where the river ran, brown and noisy after last night's rain; and there the rising sun rose near them, and led Luned to turn her head to see it top the trees. It was at that very moment she caught a distant sound of other hoofs, galloping fast over some stony place far away, followed by a distant halloo. She thought little of it, sharing with Gringolet the full sense of the cool turf, the green leaves, the call of a cuckoo in the woods, and the half-grumbling sound of the river Sarthi and its noisy brown water. But when they reached the ford, to find the flood-water tumbling over the big boulders below it, a call from a neighboring clump of trees startled her.

The call was sharp and shrill, and sounded as if the caller were breathless with running. She rode Gringolet at once towards the trees, and as she drew near she thought she caught a glimpse of a black hare disappearing through them. Then, to her amaze, an old woman stepped out, with a sallow, wizened face, set upon a figure almost lithe enough to be that of youth. As for her garb, ordinarily it would appear to consist of dirty black tatters, but over these was now drawn a garment, silvery and gleaming in the slant rays of the rising sun,—a handsome gray tunic! Still more astonishing, in one hand the old woman bore a naked short-sword, while under the other arm she carried a bundle of clothes strung together with a leathern lace.

"Malen," cried Luned, "what is it?"

The old woman, freeing her left arm of its burden, held up her hand as if to beg silence. As she raised it, a ragged black sleeve, like a daw's broken wing, dropped from her arm, emerging from the short, silver-braided shoulder-sleeve of the gray tunic. Then reverting her thumb, she pointed to the house.

From the house, indeed, came a strange hubbub,—shouts of men, sounds like the starting and rending of wood. Luned did not know Malen well, and was more than half afraid of her, for Malen was said to have the "evil-eye" and to be able to take the hare's shape. But there was that now in Malen's face which made Luned believe in her good-will.

She rode Gringolet a few paces nearer her, crying again, "Malen, what,—what is it?"

Then Malen gasped out one word, "How—Howel Farf!" and for want of breath, by way of further reply, picked up the bundle of clothes by its strap, undid it, and held up the long hose, vest, and under-côte of a boy's costume.

Luned, with lips parting, and eyes growing wider as they looked

from the boy's clothes to the tunic, hesitated and finally slipped off Gringolet's back.

"Howel?" she questioned. The name of Howel, her mother's half-brother (nick-named Howel Farf because of his great beard), was of ill-omen at Rhos.

Malen nodded. "Twenty of him!—all round the house, thrusting at the doors, and crying out for Rob, Rob the Red."

This name, coupled with Howel's, sent a stream of terrors flowing through Luned's imagination. Robart Goch, or Rob the Red, was as fervent a ruffian as lived in the whole countryside. More may be told of him another day. Enough now, that he had killed one of Howel's Red-hands, and fled for protection to Rhos. This was before Luned's coming home last winter from the convent of St. Brieux, and though Howel's name prompted her imagination now, a sense of utter perplexity seized her as she pointed again to the clothes: "But, Malen, what are they for?"

"For you. You must put them on, my pretty," said she.

Luned's eyes grew wider,—enlarged to their extremes of blue and white. "Put on boy's hose?"

"Ay," continued Malen: "you must ride after your blessed dad and wear them! hose and weskit and chewnic,—you must don them, wear them, save Rhos in them!"

"But I must go back and say good-by to mother,—my dear little moth' first. Oh, I must!"

"Honey, you can't, you can't indeed. I heard you whistle for your little nag there, in the wood awhile ago. Now, you must play Jack, the whistling lad, and ride after your dad!"

Malen's black sparks of eyes blinked as she said this. She paused for breath, but her lips still twitched with excitement, and her gray locks fell in spare threads about her peaked eyebrows; and she held up the gray tunic, as if to point her tale with it, when she gained breath to continue.

"I said to your mother, 'Sweet lady,' I said, 'that I knew when a babe,—your brother will not touch Malen. Na,' I said, 'my Lord Beard durst not touch Malen. I'll take clothes and chewnic to the little maid. Ay, ay!' And she took it out and gave me hose and the weskit with it, and you must put 'em on and ride, and find your father—and bring him back, and save Rhos and my sweet lady, your mother, from your black uncle,—and his fiends and devils—and devils and fiends!"

Her voice rose towards the end of this till it became a scream; her words came faster; her thin-lipped jaws worked, one this way, the other that way, while her eyes closed till they were only like two wrinkles of rage.

"Did they hurt thee?" asked Luned, half-thinking of Malen, half

of the news she had brought, and shivering a little as she looked at the boy's clothes and the tunic.

Malen for reply laughed an evil-sounding, edged laugh, and pointed to a grove of oaks and birches below the ford. "There you must 'tire your limbs and lose your yellow locks?" she said, producing an enormous pair of scissors, almost as large as sheep-shears. "Would I had Howel's weasand between 'em!" she said, snapping them.

Luned was frightened at such a breaking out of passion. Malen threw the tunic across Gringolet's back, with a fierce "c'lk!" and Luned, wondering and fearing, led him along to the lower trees. Before now she had often wished she could be a boy. She did not know till this moment how much she loved her girl's long, yellow-brown locks.

There, while the May morning was still young, and the sunbeams shot almost level through the half-leafed oaks, Malen's wrinkled brown hands rapidly unclothed her, and bared her white arms to the cool of the river, and then,—oh, poor, trembling maid!—cut away her flowing locks, and turned her from the prettiest of young girls into a shy, uneasy boy.

Luned was still touching her arms and neck to find out how much of her hair was left, and pulling the tunic closer,—still troubling, indeed, over the strangeness of all her sensations,—when she saw Malen's face twitch with a grimace.

"Hark!" she cried, stooping her head, the better to listen: then, "Quick!" She seized Gringolet's bridle as she spoke, untethered him, and led him to the edge of the trees, pointing to the nearest thicket of the neighboring woodside, half a furlong farther away. "To Llanfair!" she said. "If you don't find your daddy there,—and I fear he'll be gone,—the Lady of Llanfair will give you saddle and pouch, and tell you where to ride. And if anybody try to hinder, since you can whistle,—for I heard how you whistled up your nag,—just whistle the capping stave of 'Mentra Gwen,'—for that is the sign between Rhosser and his men,—and so ride on. Not a word besides. Away with you now!"

Luned heard the tramp of feet,—men running, she thought; and with one cry of "Oh Gringolet!" she had mounted him and galloped off.

II.

HOWEL FARF.

To reach Rhos when he did, so early in the morning, Howel Farf had to start from his house, nearly forty miles away, soon after night-fall.

Howel had lately made what he called a very pretty offer to Luned's

father and his brother-in-law—Roger or Rhosser—to match his ward Jestyn with her. Luned, having come home for good from St. Brieux, was supposed to be marriageable; and if Rhosser agreed, Howel swore he would make Jestyn (as he was without wife or children himself) his sole heir. Jestyn's father, Morgan of Gandy, who was given to strange practices in alchemy and divination, had after a quarrel over some land with Howel disappeared soon after his son's birth. Howel said Morgan was drowned, and continued to take charge of the lad, against the will of the mother, who only escaped Howel and the suit he pressed upon her by catching the black sickness and dying. That was at Maesaleg. Possibly it was because of these things that Rhosser did not approve of Howel's latest plan: "Rhosser's too old to be taken in, and Rhosser's daughter too young to be wed:" that was the message he sent.

"Very well," said Howel on hearing the message. "He has another husband in his head; but his head has got a worm in it too!"

"Ay," said Cadno (Howel's captain of Red-hands, a man of bulk), "what did Walter say when he supped with Rhosser at the wine-house at Laugharne? He said Rhosser kept crooking his third finger all through the meat and wine; and that, says he, is your true sign of the man who is going mad, with a worm in his head, like a curly worm in a cob-nut. When the worm curls, the finger must crook."

"Pwt!" said Howel,—"Rot!" (a favorite expletive of his). "It's nonsense about the worm, but he's right about the man. They say Rhosser cannot sleep, and walks the hall of Rhos all night, and dreams he's in the tidal ditches of Taf. Now he is gone to White Abbey to make peace with the Church, for he knows he won't last a year. All the more reason why Jestyn should wed his dainty daughter: and he shall—he shall!"

"How?" said Cadno.

"How, fool? Why, carry her off and marry her out of hand. Jestyn is a nice boy, that any maid might take to. When she sees him, she is his. I'll give him a chance,—I'll give him three!"

"What if she won't?"

"Pwt! she must, else I'll—I'll—but she shall!" And as he said it he laughed to himself, passing his hand over his black-bearded mouth so as to draw out the mustaches.

When, a day or two later, the news came of Rhosser's journey to Castle Arberth, Howel was pleased.

"Good!" said he, speaking very softly, as he always did when he meant mischief; "then we'll to Rhos!"

The house at Rhos was barely awake when Howel Farf and his men reached there that morning and came thundering without. In the absence of Rhosser, Luned's mother reigned within. A woman of spirit,

the Lady of Rhos was frail to look upon, and walked with a slight limp. Her thin features had to be seen at their best ere one noticed her invincible gray eyes. Even Howel Farf admitted he was afraid of his sister's eyes. They were flashing in a way to frighten him now, had he seen them, as she went limping, pale and angry, across the floor of the hall, which was strewn with overturned stools and pails. In the midst of them, my Lady paused, a sword as long as herself in one hand, confronting Malen, who had obtained a wayfarer's lodging last night, and slept before the great hearth.

The long table, forty feet by seven, was already thrust, end-on, against the double doors. A half-clad girl in a red petticoat was hastily blowing up a fire on the hearth with a bellows; another girl was hitching a caldron of water a notch lower to catch the curling flames.

"Where was the little maid?" that was the one question, and that was given fresh force from without.

"Hark!" said the Lady of Rhos; "what are they calling?"

All listened. The calls became plainer and louder. "Rob—Rob Goch, or the little mistress! Rob, or the Maid of Rhos?"

"But where is the little maid?" said her mother, looking at them all.

"There!" said Malen, pointing over her shoulder, "there—by the water-side. I saw her riding her dandy horse, a-whistling as she went like any lad."

"Then we must stop her coming back."

Even as she said it the clamor at the door redoubled.

"We have no lad," continued her mother; "Luned must be our messenger. And since she is out, she must remain out, and ride away ere they spy her! She cannot come back; but if she can whistle six notes of 'Mentra Gwen' she can go after her father. We must send her the gray tunic and the boy's hose to the meadow. And you must cut her hair short about her head,—poor maid. But how?" She looked dubiously at Malen, and then, seized with an idea, continued: "Howel will think it a joke if we put the tunic on you, Malen, and a pair of sheep-shears in your hand, and we can get you out. Then you must get Luned safe away. That is it. But Howel,—how will you slip through him and his dogs?"

"Leave it to me," said Malen; "leave him to me, lady-honey. I know Howel Farf and he knows me. Not one of his dirty dogs will so much as bark at Malen."

"Don't forget to tell her to whistle soft the six notes I told you of,—from 'Mentra Gwen.' 'Tis the signal between my lord and his men. There's luck in the whistle."

The next thing was to get Malen out. The lowest shot-window was on the turret stair; it was narrow, but Malen was a knife-blade and

could go through the crack of a door. Bundle of clothes and all, they succeeded in pushing her through, a rope under her arm-pits; and she had almost reached the ground ere Howel's men saw what was happening. Then they made a rush, and seeing the preposterous figure the old woman cut in her fluttered rags, her poor naked feet protruding to feel the ground, they fell back with a howl of laughter. This outburst was followed by a derisive chorus:

“Hag, hag, where's your nag?”

they cried. But as Howel approached his men fell back.

Then began between Howel and Malen a battle extraordinary. Malen, recovering herself, stood beside a white lime-washed standing-stone, of which there was a ring round the house. She held up her sheep-shears in the air, but beyond this she said and did nothing. She eyed Howel with a fixed look, her head bent. He returned the gaze for a time, laughing at her strange mummery; then his eyes fell as he muttered:

“What mischief has the old witch in her head?” He turned away.

Malen had won; she walked quite close past him, without hindrance, and on to a wattle hut she sometimes occupied in the wood that still bounds the house of Rhos on that side. On entering it, the old woman banged the crazy door, as if in fury.

It was a hovel built against a bank of clay and red earth. Howel sent Cadno to watch the door, but he paid small heed to his charge until a rustle near by startled him. Then he turned, and thought he saw a black hare disappearing through the trees. On going to the hut, he found its door slightly ajar, and the place was empty.

Fearing Howel's anger, Cadno went back to find him directing a party at the rear of the house.

“A black hare!” he cried, drawing his short sword and rapping Cadno sharply with the flat of the blade over the knuckles,—“a hare. Then you can turn harrier, Cadno!—fat as you are! Off, go and hunt her. Take the two hounds: they are in the way here. I'll give you an hour: else——”

He dropped his head with a suave smile, and shot his sword into its sheath with a snap. Then he whistled up two enormous black hounds, which were of the party. “Take 'em to the hut,” he said; “they will soon have the old lady, wherever she's gone.”

Cadno went as he was bid. In less than a quarter of an hour they heard the hounds baying down the river.

“Blood of man!” cried Howel; “to see my pets harry a black witch will do my heart good. Now, my chaffers, five of you shall keep guard here till we bring back the hare. Then we'll roast her,—we'll roast her in front of the house,—and they shall sup on her. Come, Jestyndear!”

Jestyn shook his head. A pale, dark, handsomely-featured face, with large, brown eyes, very different to Howel's, and straight black mustaches, showed itself under his feathered velvet cap. Superbly attired in a totally black riding suit,—shoes, tunic, velvet cap,—he had a bearing which marked him out from the rest of the party.

"I'll stay, sire; with your permission," he said carelessly. "As 'twas the Maid of Rhos brought us here, here I stay till I see her." He spoke in a tone independent, yet deferential, as if he feared his guardian while struggling to hold his own.

His refusal to go, as it was, half offended Howel, who went off with his ejaculation of "Pwt!" to loosen his horse from its tether in the oak-scrub and ride after Cadno. The baying of hounds continued, now louder, now fainter, muffled by intervening trees. When Howel was gone Jestyn sent the remaining men off round the house as a patrol-party, and himself leant against a tree, his eyes on the lowest window.

"I would dearly like a glimpse of the maid," he murmured.

III.

LUNED IN THE WOODS.

THE same sullen baying of the hounds that reached Jestyn below the walls of the house pursued Luned as she rode on into the wood. If it frightened her, it terrified Gringolet. His gallop grew wilder, and she soon lost all control of him. His bright eyes, his sharp, thorn-like little ears showed his terror as she bent forward on his neck. Once again she closed her own eyes, afraid to see what might overtake or await them. But then some of the long, oaken branches, hanging low enough to brush her head, warned her she must watch, and be ready to stoop at any moment if she would not be swept off his back.

The baying of the hounds, the thought of Rhos with Howel Farf beating at the doors, and his men ranging under the walls, was it not enough to make the May morning black? The hounds were not only hounds in her imagination; their baying was a sound to start from every thicket shapes of terror and evil. Haunted by these thoughts, she saw Gringolet carry her past the cross-forest track, that they ought to have taken to the north, without being able to turn his head. He went on at a headlong gallop, his hoofs scattering over her the little pools from last night's rain, while the trees flew by like so many green splashes, until, grown dizzy to see them, she swayed wildly from side to side upon his bare back. When there came another parting in the ways, at a huge oak, Gringolet took that which led to the left; and as he turned she caught a glimpse of two black shapes behind. She shuddered then, as she thought of Malen, and of these hounds tearing the hare into a thousand pieces, and then, whetted by her blood, pursuing

Gringolet with redoubled fury. At this moment Gringolet, in his terror, stumbled, and righting himself with a lurch, made her lose her seat and slip sideways off his back. She would have fallen but for her hold on the reins. "We are lost," she thought,—"oh, we are lost!" Her eyes gazed, appealing from Gringolet to a leaning birch-tree beside them. One glance more, and the hounds might be upon them.

But no; instead of taking the same path as Gringolet had chosen, at the master-oak, they took the other. Unable to mount again in her terror, she saw them quite clearly through the underwood,—their black heads close to the ground. But in a breath they had left her and Gringolet in their rear. It only remained to work along the river-side, if she could, to another of the forest-roads that ran northward towards Llanfair.

On remounting she started slowly, as the track compelled Gringolet to pick his way with care. It descended very slightly after a while, and grew rough and stone-strewn, until it had become little better than the rocky bed of a small rivulet. On emerging from the thicket, it lost itself in an open space of grass by the river-side, guarded by gray bowlders.

Though she did not recognize the spot, she knew that they must be in the wrong direction altogether. She turned Gringolet about, filled with a sick despair, as a bank enamelled with primroses showed another track zigzagging up into what looked like an impenetrable dark grove of master oaks, undergrown with briars. She jumped down to walk at Gringolet's head, seeing no way through that a horse could take. But she dared not delay; the thoughts of Rhos and of her mother were like whips to her courage.

Happily, attempting the bank, and reaching its top, she saw that beyond the dark oaks was a small grove of silver-birches. Now Luned loved the birch beyond any tree in the world. She gazed upon these as if they were friends; and at the same moment there came the chuckling of a blackbird from the next hazel copse, and she saw the clear white light beyond that showed the edge of the wood. *Hasten, Gringolet!* She sprang to his back, and soon they had galloped out upon the open moor beyond the last trees. Then Luned's spirits rose at a bound. A dark elbow of brown mountain on the right contained in its inner crook the Llanfair demesne. She heard a cuckoo calling from its trees; riding on, she soon caught sight of a curl of dun smoke in the glyn. Her only qualm came at the thought of being recognized there in her boy's garb. She looked anxiously up the long elm avenue when she reached the gates. But she met nobody between the elms; she met nobody in the cool and dark court-yard at the top, to open whose wicket she had to dismount. A foolish young hound finally appeared that insisted on walking sideways at first under Gringolet's feet and then her own,—the sole living creature she had seen so far.

Finding a stable-door open, she led Gringolet in, and fastened him in an empty stall. In the next stall stood a handsome black horse, richly caparisoned with a brown sendal saddle-cloth embroidered with gold. She felt her apprehensions return ten-fold at the sight, dreading as she did to encounter strange faces and doubtful looks. Her hope had been to find the Lady of Llanfair alone; but there must be visitors at the house. The horse evidently belonged to some gentleman of consequence. She was almost as afraid of strange gentlemen in her boy's garb as of Howell's hounds, but she nerved herself to be bold. A side-door, recessed in a deep arch, let her into the house by a long passage. The whole place appeared to her asleep. She passed two door-ways into the kitchens, which were empty. Then she remembered it was Calanmai Fair Day, when it was the custom for the maids and men-folk to go down to the village feast every year.

The passage brought her into the great hall of the house, an apartment of some state, with a dais and a long table at its head, lit by two small, arched windows high in the wall. One end of the table was spread with a white diaper, and upon it a silver salver with herbs and salt, a dish of viands, a silver flagon, a dainty pile of small flat loaves of white bread: inviting repast, evidently prepared for two people, though nobody was to be seen. A noise of crackling came from under the table. It was a yellow cat, eating some stolen bone,—and the viands on the board and the noise beneath it reminded Luned that her slight breakfast of oatcakes and honey, hours ago, had left her ravenous. She called to the cat, but it ran away and up the stairway, behind the dais. Quite innocently she followed it, and at the top of the stairs found a narrow passage, which led into a small apartment. And here Luned was brought to a sudden stop as she stole along, for she heard voices, and one was a sob. A single glance was all she had. It left an uncertain impression of the bowed back, the rich military tunic, of a tall gentleman bending before a lady whose hands were clasped over her face.

Luned turned and fled. She sped past the top of the stairway in her fright, and attempting to enter the next door-way, knocked her forehead against the door, bruising herself painfully and losing her cap. Hastily, then, without waiting to recover it, she reached the stairs and descended,—a little confused and momentarily stunned from the blow.

When Luned reached the hall, she sank into a seat at the end of the table. After a while she heard steps descending. Whereupon she steadied herself, and rose from her seat.

The step was light; it might have been the foot of a girl. A slight form, graceful and radiant, in a sky-blue gown, stepped out from the stairs,—Efa herself, the lady of Llanfair! She started at seeing the figure of a youth and apparent stranger. She turned her face away

from the light, too, Luned noticed, bending her head as she spoke. Her voice shook with a slight tremor, moreover.

"Well, young sir!" she began, and then, looking a second time at Luned, exclaimed: "Why, sweet silly, what is this? Why, Luned! You haven't run away? You are pale. Are you hurt? What can have brought you here in these runaway strange feathers?"

Luned, rising, did her best to affect a blunt, boyish gait. But when the Lady of Llanfair advanced and took her hands, saying, "But, child, child, how tired you look," she lost her self-command, tried to laugh, and so trying, burst into tears. Efa drew Luned to her breast, and passing her hand round her neck to comfort her, said, "And all your pretty hair too?"—herself beginning to laugh and sob together for sympathy.

"But how did you come?" was her next question, "and why?"

Luned's sobs stopped: she tried again to smile.

"I rode Gringolet: he is in the stable. My uncle Howel and his Red-hands!—they are at Rhos; and I must find my father. Oh! did he not come here yesterday?" she clasped her hands in terror.

"Dear child," cried the other, "he is gone! and Howel at Rhos!—Howel, and your mother all alone with the maids, and you turned post-boy. No wonder you are pale. My poor little Luned,—taste some of this bragget; 'twill revive you wondrously. But what was that?"

"Alack!" said Luned, "can it be Gringolet?"

The Lady of Llanfair shook her head.

She started, looked uneasily towards the stair, and then hastily went to its foot. After a pause she ascended, closing the side-door after her. Luned, remembering the purple tunic, and having always the fear of Howel's men and their pursuit in her mind, listened anxiously. She heard steps on another staircase; then came a pause, and then again she heard light descending steps, with others, heavier, following.

Some little while passed. Luned had left the bragget untasted. Her head had sunk forlornly between her two hands on the table. Before she knew it she had dozed. She woke to feel Efa running a light hand over her shortened locks.

"Child, child," she said, "you have not eaten nor drunk. Now you must both eat and talk to me. Your face is full of Rhos and your mother. I have been to your little hackney in the stable. Why, he has no saddle. You must have ridden like an Arab. Tired?—he is quite spent."

"I cannot stay," began Luned. "Think of Howel and all his Red-hands ranging about Rhos. That is why. Oh, have I been sleeping?"

"A little. But those wasps? How did you get out of the house without a stab?"

"I was out already, out at daybreak,—riding Gringolet, and now, as father is gone from here, I must ride after him."

"I will send a messenger, and you will stay here with me."

But Luned was not to be persuaded. After she had eaten a little food, she begged Efa to go with her to the stable, and see to finding Gringolet a saddle; and Efa gave way before her urgency.

The stable was a dark one. They led Gringolet out into the yard for better light,—Luned holding his head. Efa herself brought water for the poor creature. While they were thus engaged, they heard a horse pause with a snort, and the rider click the latch of a side-gate that was luckily locked. He must have come up very stealthily to arrive thus without their even hearing his hoofs.

The same thought occurred to both of them: could it be one of Howel's men in pursuit? Quick as thought, Efa had whipped Gringolet and Luned into the stable. She had thrown a horse-rug over the one, and was whispering the other to hide in a neighboring stall, as there was not time to reach the hay-loft, when the new-comer, who must have left his horse at the gate, was heard fairly running across the yard.

IV.

THE WAY TO ARBERTH.

LUNED had not fully secured a hiding-place, when the hasty newcomer was already staring in.

"Ha, ha!" was all he was able to ejaculate at first, for want of breath: but he made up for lack of words by the furious, suspicious glances he cast at the half-covered horse and at his wife, for it was the Master of Llanfair. He attempted no greeting to her, but at length blurted out:

"What, what! What hot squire is this that"—he hesitated here, looking about and peering into the depths of the stable, and then added,—"that o'er-rides his cattle?" With this he made a sudden dive into the stall where Luned lurked in increasing terror. She did not know but that Howel himself was at hand; Sir Griffis's voice was in truth so excited that she did not recognize it. But when he seized her roughly by the arm she was undeceived. What she saw was a burly little gentleman of fifty, with fierce bloodshot eyes under bent brows, and the slightest pretext of a chin under an exuberant red mustache. He was handsomely accoutred in buff and blue; dark-blue hose, light-blue sleeves, buff surcôte over his steel-vesture. He was dragging her out in triumph, puffing out one furious "Ha, ha!" after another, when his wife cried, "Stay, Sir Griffis. Don't you recognize Luned, little Luned of Rhos? Where did you leave her father? Your friend Howel has laid his Red-hands about the house!"

"Serves Rhosser right!" cried Sir Griffis, not knowing where to turn in his rage, and pulling off his stiff riding-gloves with a jerk. "He laughed at my Frankish hose and surcôte, and said my tongue was turned Norman. If I had not known him for a madman, I'd have spitted him. As it was, I left him and his company and turned home."

Rhosser had no doubt been amusing himself at Sir Griffis's expense; but this was not the reason for the speedy return home of the latter. Sir Griffis was jealous of his wife, and had schemed to make this sudden return with a view to trapping a suspected rival. An hour—half-an-hour—earlier, and he would certainly have found the strange visitor Luned had seen. Luned, in her gray tunic and young squire's dress, served as a very fair substitute.

"You are well returned!" said presently his lady, while he fumed. "You have a chance now any man might envy you!"

"And what's that?"

"To save Rhos!"

"What, and turn Howel into my night-hawk and knife-in-the-back. Perhaps that is what you desire?" he sneered, going off to get his horse.

Efa turned to Luned and reassured her. "I'll see you equipped for your ride. You must not mind Sir Griffis."

When he returned, he offered, in no very gracious manner, to escort Luned a mile or two. "But," he added, "she must wait for him to refect and rest a while first." As may be supposed, Luned was both impatient to get on her way, and disliked the idea of any such escort. On her explaining her need of haste, he affected to be hugely offended, and flinging out of the stable left the two alone with Gringolet.

Efa thereupon found saddle and bridle for Gringolet. Then, all being ready, she led him out and walked by Luned's side to the end of the elm avenue, directing the while as to her route.

On reaching the outer gates of the avenue they saw quite clearly a figure on horseback, high on the western hill, whose arms and trappings gleamed in the afternoon sun as he passed, was visible for a moment, and then was gone. Luned saw that her companion's face was full of pain as she gazed, straining her glance, after the disappearing figure. As Luned looked a second time into her soft gray eyes, she thought she saw two tears imminent; but they did not fall.

"Sweet child," said she, "dear Luned, I have no one to tell my troubles to. Yon horseman is the Knight of Kemes. He returned to these parts but last week from Normandy. You have heard how ten years ago, a girl of eighteen, I was pledged to him. He went to the Frankish fields. They married me to Sir Griffis a year later; he did not return. He has power and estate now. He came back to claim me, hoping I could redeem my pledge. But I am changed, and even if I

were free, I could not. And he—he is changed, and my love for him is gone. I can love no more. See!"—she drew a little turquoise ring from her bosom—"there is his pledge. More I may not tell you! But I promised to send him a message ere he should return to Normandy. This ring, I prithee, carry to him, and say I trust to his courtesy and I shall pray for him alway, and that he must bear you company as far as Arberth Castle, where he will tarry. But I—say that I—hereafter may set eyes on him no more. And in truth, sweet maid, he were best forget me, and all that I was to him."

Luned grew so sorrowful at the burden of this confession that the Lady of Llanfair changed her note.

"But," she cried, "you must not look so mournful. Think now of all that hangs on you and your brave hackney. Play the boy, whistle those notes too of 'Mentra Gwen' if you are in trouble, and forget the while you ever wore womanish weeds. Up with your chin. See; here is a little silver-hilted dagger for your belt. May you never need it! Say not a word to any; and as for yonder gentleman, bear him the ring with a careless, courteous air; and you were wiser to say nothing to him of your father, but tell him, if he asks you, that your name is—shall we say?—Ivor, and your errand pressing."

When Luned reached the top of the hill, she saw the horseman riding carelessly, head down, rein loose, along a descending grass-grown track far below her. Knowing how much depended on her making haste, she shook off her maidenish terrors of him with a shake of the reins, and cantered Gringolet lightly after him down the green slope.

He took no notice of her even when she was only a dozen paces away. Then, embarrassed by his preoccupied mien, she coughed. He raised his eyes, scanning her, with the unmoved expression of a man who does not wish to be taken out of his own thoughts.

She tried to give the message and the ring to him precisely as Efa had said, but, whether from shyness or the thought of her own and Efa's troubles, a blush came to her cheek and a break to her voice; and the knight, growing interested, bent a pair of steady eyes critically upon her. Then, with a smile, he surprised her by suddenly doffing his steel cap, lifting it lightly by the red leather flap shaped like a bird's wing and fastened on one side of it.

"So," says he, looking puzzled, "I prithee, sweet young sire, if I am to be thy convoy as far as Arberth, what am I to call you? Perchance Owain or Gawain; which shall it be? Two of my escort wait below, but you—you will ride at my side, I trust."

"Ivor, I pray you, my lord! So the Lady Efa said."

His eyes fell again at the name. He turned the ring in the palm of his great glove, and then, ungloving his other hand, put it away.

"Come on," he said, "young squire, we have a long ride before us. If

we meet hind, knight, or pedler, 'twill be prudent for you to ride a few paces behind, between my body-squire and me. And if you are questioned, say you go with your lord to the tourney at Arberth Castle!"

With that he struck spurs into his horse, and led the way over the rough and furzy slope, stretching to the water-side thickets of the Cothie River.

They journeyed on, then, with little incident, and the knight after a while relaxed his pace, and fell again into abstraction.

Luned's impatience grew in proportion as he appeared less concerned at their rate of advance.

A score of times she was about to begin,—“I pray you, my lord, I had needs make great haste; permit that I ride on before,” but always her courage failed. Once, as the day began to fade, and the sun sank over the moors and meadows and high farm-lands below Srecelly, she did attempt it; but he fairly took the words out of her mouth.

“We draw nigh at last,” he said; “it is long since we passed Llanboidy. I know not, young sir, whom you seek at Arberth?”

“The Master of Rhos,” she replied, forgetting Efa’s warning about being too communicative.

“Rhos?” he repeated; “what Rhos? People have called me Master of Rhos.” He said this with an air of long-accustomed superiority,—a pride of rank and place and great possessions,—which did not escape her.

“I mean Rhos-in-Elfed,” she said timidly. “I seek Rhosser of Rhos!”

“Rhosser of Rhos!” said the knight: “It is a vile herald’s pun. There is no cousinry between the names of Rhosser and your Rhos. But, let me tell you, as I am your escort, and your guardian for the time being, you do not well to trust your safety to that same Rhosser, who has stolen land from us, as no doubt he has stolen a coat-of-arms to suit his fine title. Rhosser of Rhos pardieu!”

Luned’s face flashed a challenge: “Nay!” she cried; “he has the blood of princes in his veins. He is a noble lord and gentleman. You do not well, sire, to speak thus of one whom—I have been told——”

She hesitated then, but glared on him so fiercely that the Knight of Kemes could not forbear a smile.

“I see,” he said, “though your French speech is so sweet, you do not favor the Norman side in our disputes. But this same Rhosser,—Rhosser of Rhos,—do you know, young Sir Ivor, that I hold a King’s warrant over him and his demesne in Elfed?”

Luned, from crimson, turned white.

“Sire,—my lord,” she protested, “you are wrong to seek his hurt, and you are very wrong—to speak thus of him to one who is his——”

"His young cousin perchance?"

"One who has left his house to seek him in great sorrow and trouble." Her pretty round face so gazed upon him, with such an eloquent reproach of cruel fate and himself in its every feature, that he coughed and flushed beneath his bronze skin. But if he had suspicions, he hid them quickly.

"Sweet young sir," he stammered, "I declare on my knightly oath I shall abide by my courteous duty to you, and will as I may further your quest. And know, if I spoke as I did, it was in ignorance."

They rode on for some miles without a word, cantering side by side, passing a dark wood, a little chapel, a wayside inn, with pack-horses at the door,—showing they were rapidly nearing some inhabited region.

At length a wide vale opened below them, and a small, straggling town on the flank of a hill, with a castle on an erratic mound starting up at its foot. The dusk was fast closing in as they descended to the street, and then climbed again to the castle-yard. The place was full of stirring men,—here, leading horses into the stall, or bearing flagons and dishes out of a side-door; there, burnishing swords. But the twilight scene about her, full of passing folk and foreign voices, that at other times would have roused her fancy, only told her how far she was from home. She felt herself trembling, as the knight, having handed over his own horse, came to her side.

"Come," he said in a voice full of consideration. "I have asked for a retired chamber for you. The gentleman you ask for is not here, but has gone to the Abbey of the White Lands. To-morrow you may fare thither after him. To-night you must stay here. All care shall be taken of you. You shall be shown to your chamber at once. A cup of wine is good when one is so tired. A good draught of it too. It shall be put at your door."

She stammered out her thanks, too tired to grasp the whole meaning of all he had said. She found herself stumbling sleepily up a winding stair in the wall after a little, round-faced page dressed in white and blue, and carrying a taper. It was but a child. He stared at her with wide eyes.

"How old are you?" he said at the door: "I am ten. They call me Perrot Secundus; for 'tis my foster brother will be Lord of Arberth, and Sir John Perrot. and I bear his name. Shall I help you to take off your long hose? I wish you weren't sick. There are honey-cakes for us, and the pages have the feathers of the roasted peacocks to play for silver groats with." He yawned himself as he spoke, and looked so chubby and rosy, that Luned forgot her rôle for a moment. Stooping, she kissed him,—so heartily, in the need of affection she felt in her absence from the friendly hearts at Rhos, that he was quite taken aback. Indeed, he gave her such a droll look that she blushed.

"I wonder who you are?" he said. "You're going at daybreak, aren't you? But you must leave your pretty red hackney; and I'll play you at chop-cheeks with the foils when you come back. I'm not going to bed, not for a long while yet."

It was some few minutes ere he returned with a flagon of wine and some sweet cakes to the door of her tiny chamber. By this she had undressed. He was pushing open the door when she cried out: "Oh, don't come in."

"One would think you were a fairy, that turned into a spider every night," he grumbled, and then went off.

Luned drank some of the spiced wine. It was sweet, soft as milk to the palate, and slightly flavored with cinnamon. As for the comfit-cakes, she took one to bed, and munching it fell fast asleep.

V.

THE GRAY TUNIC TASTES STEEL.

VERY early next morning Luned was aroused by a voice in her chamber. She thought she was still at Rhos and wondered whose the voice could be? It was Perrot, who stood at her bedside.

"There," said he, "I got up to see you. I promised your famous lord I would. He must be a baron at court. Look what he gave me!" He held up a gold mark. "You are to start at five: there is a brown hackney for you. Your chestnut is lame. You haven't a very stout fist for a squire, have you? A lucky thing your lord is so big." He threw the gold coin into the air and caught it again, hopped on one foot, and said, "He must be a prince! I'm going now, for I know you're afraid to show your spider-legs to me."

And off the cheerful little imp trotted.

She felt she could have slept for hours longer. The morning air came in cold through the eye-let window. But the sight of the gray tunic lying across the chest at the foot of her pallet quickly aroused her. It reminded her of Rhos and of her mother, who had probably not slept all night. Even now Rhos might be in Howel's reckless grip. She jumped up at the thought, catching a glimpse of a gray morning sky above a noble grove of elms, where the storks were cheerily cawing and squabbling.

When she had descended the stair and stepped out at its foot into the court-yard, she found there, though it was so early, plenty of folk going and coming. She wanted to see Gringolet, and was seeking courage to ask where he was stabled, when Perrot came up.

"I'm not half awake yet," he said. Indeed, his round eyes looked blurred, and the way in which his chubby fists rubbed his pointed nose suggested nothing so much as a sleepy puppy-hound.

He seemed to know every nook and corner of the place, and took her to the stable at once.

Gringolet was lying down in his stall, his off hind leg stretched out stiffly and much swollen, but he staggered up at her call.

She had put a comfit-cake from last night into her pouch and gave it to him. Then Perrot, who had run off, came back, and sang out that my Lord of Kemes was awaiting her within the great hall. She kissed Gringolet, her heart sinking.

"Why, you are turned as white as if you were going to be whipped!" said Perrot. "Are you afraid of your great knight? I'm not afraid of anybody."

As they went out, he mischievously added in a whisper that the knight was teased about her last night, "after the harping."

Luned grew uneasy. "Why?" she asked.

"Nissen said you were no young squire, but a dressed-up maid. Are you? I think you are too."

"Oh! say I am not, if they ask you!" she said earnestly. "Why, can maids whistle? Listen!" She whistled the refrain of "Merch Megab." Perrot scanned her curiously with his sleepy eyes the while.

"Yes, you can whistle," he admitted, leading the way to the hall.

They did not find my Lord of Kemes there; but there was mead and *pain-de-main** and butter set forth for Luned. After breaking her fast on these, she was hurried by Perrot to the court-yard, where a groom held two horses, a lumpy brown and a noble black. Beside them, at the mounting stage, stood the knight. Luned was forgetting her squire's salutation to her supposed master, when Perrot startled her by saying:

"You are surely a maid, to forget your congé. Off with your cap, quick!"

She made a prettily awkward attempt at it. The knight, as he stood there,—his purple tunic over a steel jacket,—wearing only a long sword, and fastening a glove, made her a bow in return. She noticed, as he turned to his horse and spoke to a groom, the stern lines in his bronzed face and the martial tune to which his words were set. She feared for Rhos, with a sick shiver of dismay, as she thought of the power of a great Norman house like this, and a great Norman like the Knight of Kemes, arrayed against it.

"Don't be afraid of him," said Perrot, as he helped Luned to mount her big brown horse. In truth, the cumbrous seat of the creature and his height, compared to Gringolet's, rather alarmed her for her journey. "Nor him!" and he nodded from behind the horse towards the knight; "I wouldn't be afraid of any Norman. But he has Welsh blood in him

* Fine white bread.

too. That's why he looks so fierce. He is not going far with you, I'll tell you. Last night one Sir Griffis of Llanfair came late hither and another with him. And he accosted your master and called him scornfully King of France and Prince of Kemes; high and hot words there were in the hall. The end of it is, a meeting on the jousting green this morning. Ha! you will miss that,—and perhaps one shall be killed too! But farewell! See, you must away! I'll see that your pretty hackney is cared for, and ride him every day round the yard."

Luned's head fairly spun with those mingled informations as she rode out from the castle gates by the knight's side. He said nothing till they passed a farm-holding a few furlongs from the castle, where a cock was crowing lustily. Thereupon, he reined up his horse to a walk, on the brink of a steep dingle.

"That cock-crow reminds me," he said, as they descended, "I may not go much farther with you. The road hence to Whitland is plain and easy; and you will find your father and rout those rascals at Rhos-in-Elfed ere night, I trust. It needs you tell him nothing of me, but give him this, young sir,—if sir I must call you." He handed her a roll of parchment with a red seal. "It is the warrant you wot of," he said. "Put it away in your safest pouch, and tell your father you won it from me in fair fight."

The words were not fairly over his lips ere a furious clattering on the road behind them made both turn and look round. At first they could see nothing, because of the sharpness of the bank over which they had just come. But ere they reached the stream that spread itself over a gravelly ford below, Luned, turning again, saw to her dismay the mailed caps and spears of two horsemen, like metal figures, in their stiff steel, and mounted on huge horses, appear over the crest of the bank. Now, the older of the two was marked by a drooping red mustache, and her heart sank as she noticed this, and recognized its wearer for Sir Griffis.

With his fellow-horseman closely attending him, he charged upon them at full gallop. The Knight of Kemes waved Luned aside, and she had backed her horse up the stream a few paces ere the others reached the ford.

"Sir Martin of Kemes!" cried Sir Griffis as he came on, "you think to escape me. Holy Asa! you sha' not. Where's your word of honor? Draw, in King Ned's name, ere my sword eats you! Shame! man!—flying away,—ay, sneaking away at daybreak,—how shall you account for that?"

The black flush of passion on his face, the puffing out of his red mustaches, the reckless fury of his gestures as he drew his sword, were amazing to behold. As for his companion,—curled locks, silken

mustaches, and effeminate features looked out of all keeping with the arms he wore.

"I was looking forward to a passage at arms," said the Knight of Kemes, drawing, and backing away with difficulty from Sir Griffis. "You shall have your will, as you will. And I have not forgot my time: it wants an hour yet of it. Till then, we speed nothing by brawling. I return when I have seen this young squire to the White Lands."

"You are very careful of your young squire," broke in the exquisite young man. "I doubt if he has heard your sword sing, for all your courage. Fight you both and shame you both, I would,—let me die if I wouldn't!" His voice sounded so slim and lisping that Luned could not forbear an hysterical little laugh.

"He shall fight you another day," said the Knight of Kemes, smiling too through his annoyance at the absurdity of the predicament, "whenas you have sharpened your lath on me."

At this Luned's heart seemed to stop. Her face grew pale, not without reason, for the exquisite young man, angered by this speech, suddenly drew his sword. He so frightened his horse, by spurring through the loose stones and bowlders towards Luned, that it plunged furiously, backed, and ended by thrusting itself rudely against the Knight of Kemes, who then, with a turn of the rein, brought his own horse sharply about, thus separating the two. But in doing this he also encountered Sir Griffis. Their swords met. Luned prayed a little prayer for courage, and grasped her dagger.

"You are a coward!" cried, nay screamed, the young man, still flourishing his sword, and turning now too on the Knight of Kemes.

He, anxious to avoid a general scrimmage, carefully held his own—now parrying a stroke, now fairly riding around Sir Griffis, and keeping by these tactics the young man, who endangered his fellow-fighter's safety the most, well engaged. They were all in the stream,—the horses furiously trampling and splashing in the shallow water,—when Luned, obeying a glance of her escort, vainly tried to back her horse. She wished her eyes would not swim, for a film of water in them prevented her seeing clearly; but she thought she saw the young man's sword touch the Knight of Kemes's left shoulder, and a red stain show there. "Oh!" she cried, and tried to pull her hard-mouthed horse about; when lo! the young man's sword suddenly flew out of his hand as if by its own volition. She distinctly saw, then, the Knight of Kemes again nod to her, motioning her to ride off up the road, while, wounded or not, fiercely as ever he sustained the hack and thrust with Sir Griffis. But she,—she would rather die than retreat. She was amazed, alarmed, and exhilarated by the whirling, singing swords. As for the young man's disarming, she could not believe it was done by ordinary sword-

play. She gazed upon him in wide-oped wonder. That look finally demoralized him. With a shrill scream he charged at her, drawing his dagger, and unluckily her horse, grown quite unmanageable, had chosen this moment to wheel about, leaving her at his mercy. He struck her at random, then in the back. The dagger struck, by good hap, on the buckle,—hardly pricking her deeply enough to make blood flow. But she cried out, piteously, "Oh, help me!" An almost simultaneous cry came from Sir Griffis, who was leaning like a sack on his horse's neck. The Knight of Kemes was at her side in a moment, and seized the young man's arm at the wrist, and caught the dagger, pulling it out of his hand.

"Attend to your master, squire!" said the knight, rudely enough: "God knows he needs heartier hands than yours!"

Luned, seeing the blood streaming through Sir Griffis's mail jacket, and overcome by the horror of his ghastly and most fatal face, grew red and pale in turn, and could not help a few piteous sobs.

"God help me!" said the knight, thinking of her plight and not Sir Griffis's,—"I never dreamt of such a mad fool's dagger-stroke. Is it deep?"

"No-o!" sobbed poor Luned; "my buckle saved me. 'Tis but a waspish prick."

"Mari be praised!" he said. "Come, we may not tarry: there is a hostelry a mile beyond. There I will carry you, and then return to these murderous fools."

They rode past out of the dingle, and along a wooded road, till they came to a cross-road.

There a battered wine-bush, a dirty red ribbon twisted in its twigs, proclaimed the hostelry. A slatternly ale-wife, with another red ribbon tied coquettishly round her fat throat, came to the door. She opened a garrulous fire of welcome on them, pushing aside two sleepy-looking horses to make way for theirs.

"Bless the young squire-at-arms! bless his noble master! bless the King and the Lord Spences!" (She meant the De Spencers.) "Yes," she knew a good cure for the blood, if it was no spade-deep thrust: a nice foul cobweb; and then a clout on top o' that." All this in voluble Welsh, which she continued to pour forth, though the Knight of Kemes could not understand her. He waltzed his horse up and down impatiently without the door, while Luned submitted to the unsavory attentions of the ale-wife. All the good woman did was to procure a kerchief and bind it beneath the tunic about the wound, which was in truth nothing. The bleeding was nearly stopped, and the smart of it was not much. All that was to be seen in the tunic was a red stain, not so big as a penny-piece, with a prick in the centre.

When she emerged she found the Knight of Kemes in conference

with the owners of the horses,—two fat Norman clerics, in rusty gowns, who were explaining with profuse humility that they were on their way to Llangolman. To their charge the knight committed Luned, under her assumed name of Ivor, for so much of the road as they might hold together.

“I fear you are wounded too, sire!” she said to him. “It is more than mine.”

“Nay, a cat-scratch!” he replied, with a gesture full of concern at their common predicament. Thereupon, waving her as considerate an adieu as might accord with her supposed character and sex and his own rank in the eyes of the strange clerics, he set spurs to his horse and rode furiously back towards the fatal hollow.

VI.

ROSSER THE WILD.

THE two clerics, when they found their companion uncommunicative, rode together at a comfortable pace, conversing in French, and politely ignoring her.

One was a joyous, black-eyed, loquacious old fellow, whose rôle it evidently was to keep the other in laughter. The other was a younger man, with a cough of some self-importance, and fidgeting white hand that went continually to his mouth.

Their pace ill accorded with Luned’s temper, which was become one of panic, as she realized how the disastrous delays of the way hitherto had told upon her errand. But she found herself muttering, “Oh, moth’, little moth’!” over and over to herself as she thought of Rhos. That one last glimpse of Sir Griffis as she had seen him,—his face bowed on the neck of his horse, the deadly faint whitening his features about his drooping mustaches, the blood on his tunic, his gauntlet that opened and shut, grasping the air. Ah, let her hasten! If she had only Gringolet, instead of this clumsy horse with the huge fetlocks.

At last she could bear the tardiness of her fellow-travellers no longer; and when a wayside duck-pond gave her a space in which to pass she set spurs to her horse, and crying, “Pardon, mes pères, je me sauve!” splashed through the edge of the pond, and lumbered off at a heavy canter.

She heard them cry out behind her; but her bolt was shot, and away she sped. The rolling canter of her steed shook her uncomfortably; but she never gave him pause until an arched gateway on her right proclaimed the entrance to a range of conventional buildings, at one end of which she could see masons busily at work,—the White Abbey.

The gate, which was of wood, stood half open, and towards it a brown-frocked monk was driving two cows. There was no sign of

festivity, that she could see; and the half-a-dozen words with the monk told her that her father was not here. Probably he was at Llangolman, where the abbot was giving a feast to-night.

Luned's mortification at this new disappointment was so great that she hardly saved herself from crying out like any girl, as she put her ungainly beast about. Then, finding from the monk's pointing hand the road she must take, she set off again at a gallop.

It was fairly dark when she rode her flagging horse through a pretty hamlet and sighted beyond it a triple row of torches beneath the trees. Their light helped her, in drawing nearer, to wonder at the noble pile of the abbot's new great barn,—such a barn as she had never believed possible. Here to-night Abbot John, who was given to doing original things, was feasting his Welsh neighbors into amity, and his Norman friends and cousinry into increased good-will, ere the final solemn ceremony of consecrating it to the Church on the morrow. A servitor helped her to dismount and took her horse, and she made her way through an inner paling towards two great barn doors. She had to wait some time without, and was terrified to see the two clerics she had run away from, who must have found a shorter way thither than herself, pass in before her. Profiting by their manner of entrance, she succeeded at length in gaining the ear of an irritable little gentleman bearing a silver-topped black wand, who in his function of usher held the door, but he bluntly and rudely refused her entrance. A moment later she was admitted through the intervention of a handsome, smiling personage, with locks awry and a flushed face, who took possession of the usher's wand with one hand, put the other over that little busy-body's round oracular mouth, and with an assumed air of gravity solemnly waved Luned in through the huge door-way, over which hung a black curtain spotted with silver stars.

“ ‘Tis my young nephew from Oxford, I swear!” he said; “ ‘tis young Gil. Come, kiss me, Gil.”

Luned happily escaped the kiss, and hastened up to the side of the tables, pursued by her quasi-uncle only so far as the nearest wine-flagon. But all the way she had to run the gauntlet of lifted and proffered wine-cups, which she avoided with so frightened a mien that more than one guest, soberer than the rest, turned to gaze after her. In truth, she might well be amazed by the scene at this feast extraordinary. A raised threshing-floor served as a dais, and was furnished with a cross-table lit by superb silver candelabra, freely borrowed from the neighbouring abbey for the occasion. But the lower end of the barn was full of dusk and shadow, thickened by the dust of the lime left by the masons, and now beaten up by the feet of those squires, friars, and little gentlemen of the countryside who were not of sufficient consequence for the high table. Overhead the oak-raftered roof hung in an umber gloom,

almost as remote as the night-sky. The dais too looked removed and august, and the presence of the abbot in the black and white robes of a feast-day, and his attendant clerics, gave a sacerdotal and stately effect to the scene. But, like his guests', the abbot's eyes were glazed over with a wine-begotten ruddy film of drowsy enjoyment, through which they beamed a gracious affirmative smile as from time to time he murmured,

"Bibule, amici beatissimi: ecce vinum!"

At the top end of the lower table arose the slender, swaying figure of one who appeared to be a young man, attired in a yellow satin surcoat and with long and somewhat scant yellow locks, who was touching a small Welsh harp to a singing melody in the minor key. He was rocking on his feet as he did so, and murmuring, more to himself than to the company, pennillion, that is, improvised harp-stanzas, strange indeed to be associated with such an occasion.

"And some will drink, drink deep to find delight,—
To course a sail along the coast of night,
That yet may waft them to the white sea-isle
Where Merlin's harp is heard a little while,—
A little while.

"And some will drink, to find a darker stair
Down to the regions where pale demons wear
Away their doom. And some crave fire t' impel
Their hearts in a smoke of sleep to the fiercer Hell
Where Maelgwn fell."

During the singing of these stanzas Luned had slowly advanced up the sides of the table till she stood immediately below the dais, where, failing her father, her glance encountered that of the yellow harper. In his expression she read a friendly spirit, and she ventured to seek help from his face alone of all those gathered about the tables.

The harper looked round, he ended his music, courteously left his seat, and came towards her with a profound bow. As he bent close she was surprised to see his face was full of small wrinkles, and lines certainly not those of the freshness of youth.

"You seek someone?" he asked in a soft voice.

She told him she wanted to find Rhosser of Rhos.

At that he opened his eyes, very wide indeed.

He looked around, and then pointed out a group of three cronies hidden behind the left-hand candelabra. The middle one of the three was Rhosser the Wild.

His arms were stretched out straight before him on the table. His head, a tawny, leonine one, was bent a little, so as to listen the better to what his right-hand neighbor, evidently a wit, was whispering in

his ear. In either hand he held a huge wine-cup of silver, and he drank alternately from either. It seemed he had undertaken to do this for some wager. Every time he drank he said either "Coch!" or "Gwyn!" meaning, no doubt, that it was either the red or the white wine, in either cup, which he had drunk.

His face, ruddy at all times, was now inflamed and ardent. His smile, if so noble and leonine a visage could not look altogether foolish, was yet too vacant not to be disconcerting. Was he in the white se aisle of the harper's song, or in the rosy paradise of fools, according to the saying which he himself was fond of quoting:

"Three cups may give fools' paradise to men,
And three cups close the gates as fast again."

Luned, filled with emotion at the sight of her father in these unfamiliar surroundings, and troubled to find his face as it were obscured by a shadow which she had never seen before upon it, watched anxiously the harper's colloquy with him.

It was without result. Rhosser nodded his head, but evidently without taking in anything of what was said to him. Seeing this, the harper next spoke to a pale, ascetic-looking, cold-eyed cleric, evidently of high rank, who sat, arms folded, lips closed, near the abbotine seat of honor. He glanced keenly at her, where she stood waiting, then bowed, apparently in acquiescence.

She dreaded the being accosted at the full feast before these great personages. But there was no help for it. Escorted by the young harper, she ascended the dais, but at the last moment, afraid of speaking to the ecclesiastic, stole aside to her father, touched him on his arm, and whispered: "Listen, father!" and again, "Father, come, or Rhos is lost!"

Rhosser started round and stared. His eyes blinked at her, then closed themselves as if on some illusion. He turned away, turned back; scanned her in perplexity up and down. Finally, with a nod to attract the harper's attention, he said, "What unholy imp have you here, Euryrn, with the face of my little Luned?" Euryrn was the harper's name.

Again she leant and whispered in his ear, "It is Luned herself. Howel's at Rhos!"

"Howel!" He laughed, with a roysterer's unconsequence, and drained the red cup. "Coch!—Howel—what a joke!" Seeing that the figure at his elbow still remained, he looked at Luned again and started from his seat. "Where's the blue horse? I've won, Walter."

Walter sat two places away on Rhosser's left.

"Turn the cups up, Rhosser," he said. "What does the man mean? Don't go yet. The blue horse is not under my seat. He is a

monster, seventeen hands high. He eats earth as he goes. Wager him back against my best brown mare in two more stoups! Wager him back, Rhosser dear!"

Rhosser gazed at him unsteadily, swayed about, then sat down heavily.

"Is there any more?" he demanded.

Luned turned away in despair. She could have cried there openly, but she dared not betray her disguise and in such a company.

Luckily for her, the young minstrel had been observing the scene, and his wit was not so much under the wine but that he divined her secret. His wit it was enabled him to come to her rescue.

He stole behind Rhosser's chair, his harp on his arm, and suddenly twanged its strings, like a peal of alarm bells. Was it the harp, or the harper, that seemed to cry in his ear:

"Ill news, Rhosser of Rhos: your house is afire; your sword's wanted?"

But still he shook his tawny mane, knitted his brows, and closed his mouth, as if to confirm himself in the belief that he need not attend to these alarms.

Then a very clear voice on his right said:

"Don't put your tarrying down to your red and white wine wager, Rhosser of Rhos, if tarry you must. Wine is a fire, not a sleep!"

"Skin of Seithenen!" said Rhosser. "I'm hot enough to need none of that fire."

He struggled to his feet. The yellow harper took his arm and escorted him to a small door behind the dais, while Luned, sad, bewildered, afraid of every face that stared after them, closely followed.

It was quite dark when Euryn lent his arm to Rhosser and helped him out of the feast. The night was very still if not too sultry for a May night, and the air was full of fragrance of sweet herbage and hawthorn blossom. An old servitor was fumbling with a great horn lantern, trying to hang it on a crook outside the barn.

"Here," said Rhosser, seizing it, "let me see this youngster."

His voice still sounded to Luned heavy and unfamiliar. She had hung back prior to this, but now came forward. The lantern gleams fell only on her hands and face, without disclosing her form and attire save as a blurred shadow. It showed her face pale and frightened, and full of a maid's aptness for a good cry struggling with the assumed hardihood proper to the boyish character. The lips quavered, the eyelids flickered like little taper flames, the eyes struggled and were strained to keep back the tears.

"Why!" cried Rhosser, "'tis Luned, little Lin, my little maid!"

He dropped the lantern, which went out, stifling its flame, and he

caught her to his arms. What sounded like a string of sobs and muffled tender words followed; the harper discreetly withdrew a few paces. The old servitor was grumbling over his lantern. Rhosser called to him to lead them to a quiet chamber. "Tired out?" (Wedi blino?) he said to her.

"No! no! not tired and not hungry. But truly, father, we must go. Howel and his Red-hands are at Rhos. I have been long on the way here; and oh! father, they may be in the house by this."

"Howel?" he murmured, as if he could not collect his ideas—"Howel at Rhos? Come! He lifted her in his strong arms, tall maid as she was, and carried her to the neighboring guest house, some fifty paces away. It was, fortunately, empty, though in disorder. Euryn followed them to the door, and there stood and waited, murmuring his rhymes to himself. Rhosser set down Luned on a bench, as though she were some tender infant. Then he went to the door.

"Bring a cup of clarré," he said to Euryn, "and a dish of eggs and lampreys, or a Penfro pasty. Here,—take this."

He gave him a purse. "This is my little maid, come alone all the way!" he added. "She shall tarry here to-night. What, you will not? She will not, she says. Obstinate!"

The clarré soon came, and a round pasty stuck full of cloves on top, containing meats and sweets cunningly mixed. A tiny taper blinking in a corner, under a little blue image of the Virgin, afforded a poor light. Rhosser, after a word or two more, promised Luned they would start immediately. He went out, muttering and talking softly to himself.

Euryn, after pressing Luned to partake of the viands, stood watching, while she sat, pulling the pasty to bits and trying to eat.

Presently he spoke again:

"You heard those pennillion I sang at the high table. A third one has come into my head that I ought to have sung. I must go back or I shall lose my gloveful of gold that the holy abbot promised me. Would you like to hear it? You must come back to the door behind the dais if you would."

But Luned, looking towards the dark outside, nodded without hearing what he said. She was wondering how soon Rhosser would come.

Euryn moved towards the door, but ere he was gone a couple of steps a dragging, leisurely stride outside announced Rhosser's return. He reappeared, his head and beard glistening with drops of water, which he shook from his head with a good-natured laugh.

He had been back to a horse-trough to plunge his head and face into the water. Now he looked like some wild, splendid monster, newly come in from a wet thicket. His eyes had lost something of

their gloze, and he had recovered his natural color. "Horses!" he said, "horses! We will start home!"

A sound of chain-bits and hoofs suggested that their horses were ready. A bell began to ring. The harper, with some lack of dignity, set off running towards the barn.

"Come," said Rhosser, "they rise from the feast. Let us haste, little Lin!"

The bell continued ringing while they mounted. As Rhosser called out farewell and they rode off, the guests were beginning to flock out of the wide doors. They still heard the bell as they turned a corner of the wood and left the last gleam of festivity behind. Luned's thoughts leaped on before. She forgot in her eagerness the scene in the abbey barn; she even forgot the harper, but she did not forget the harp-melody he had played,—

"Where Merlin's harp is heard a little while,—
A little while."

Rhosser relapsed for a while into a heavy mood, only rousing himself now and again to ask brief questions as to Howel's raid, the way and the small circumstances of her escape, and of her finding him.

Suddenly Luned said, "But this is not the way I came."

"No, child."

"But I left my own horse at Arberth."

"Your horse?"

"Gringolet!"

"Who lent you that ugly brute?"

"The Knight of Kemes got it for me at Arberth."

"The Knight of Kemes! Where met you him? On the way to Arberth? And he is at Arberth now? I fear we will lose Gringolet; some Perrot or other will fancy him. Well, you must manage with this beast now; don't spare him; dig in the spurs; we must ride fast. I have other scores to settle with my Lord of Kemes."

"Oh, sire," she cried, pulling out the parchment she had had from him, "here is a King's warrant he held against Rhos, which he bade me give you."

"Kind indeed!" said Rhosser. "I defy any Norman to touch Rhos. Uncle Howel is another matter. He is of Welsh kind. But the Knight of Kemes! It is high time we made another raid on his lowlands of Rhos-in-Penfro." He chuckled at the idea. "A King's warrant, and the King tottering." He spurred his horse on in the excitement of the thoughts it brought, and fell to laughing and talking to himself, and left Luned in the rear.

After a while he paused for her to come up. "Those ugly Flemish horses are no good," he said; "you should have stuck to your little red

Arab. I am afraid I must leave you at Uchdrud when I pick up the men I sent to wait me there. You shall ride home quietly on the morrow."

"No, no, no!" cried Luned; "you would not leave your little squire behind."

Rhosser laughed. "Never!" he said.

But Luned rode on, sorrowing for Gringolet at every pull this hard-mouthed beast gave his reins, and at every jolt he caused her by his ungainly stride.

Gradually they got used to the darkness. Puffs of cooler air, scented by the blossoming apple-trees under a house that stood, closed and silent, off the wayside, reminded Luned of summer nights at home. And again she shivered at the thought of her mother and of Howel's wickedness. As for her father, she was trying to reconcile herself to the fact that he lived in another world altogether than that she had known hitherto,—a world of tumult, and wild riot, and sudden death. The night-wind caught a heavy sigh on her lips as she thought of these things, and with that sigh seemed to carry away the last breath of her childhood for ever.

In this mood she rode on, until it was abruptly changed by a loud barking of dogs, who rushed furiously out from the gate of a quiet farm-cote. Luned could not help a slight outcry. The beasts reminded her of those terrible hounds of Howel's.

Rhosser reined up, calling to the dogs, which slunk off. Luned, in excuse, began to tell him about the hounds.

"So he laid his hounds on to you, little heart!"

"No, on to Malen; but they came after me!"

"Croen Sathan!"* he muttered, driving his spurs into his horse. "Come, I would we were at Rhos!"

Was he roused at last. Luned was pleased to find him in the spirit she had longed to see. She drew a freer breath as she urged her lumbering horse along behind. The sultry air of the lower lands had changed into one filled with cool currents, that suggested rain, perhaps storm.

They had come to the skirts of a moor, which lay, pale and indeterminate, about them. Rhosser called out something to her that she could not catch; but she saw that they were verging on a boggy space of the moorland. Even as he spoke the keen, damp scent of the rushes reached her, and she shivered when two snipe flew by, piping a plaintive tone.

"That is unlucky!" said Rhosser, reining up. "Did you hear? Did you see them?"

*Skin of Satan.

"Two birds."

"They were not birds!" He spoke with intense vehemence, and alighted heavily from his horse. He crossed himself, and drew a cross with his heel on the turf. "Hark now!"

A wind had sprung up,—a cold, humid, unnatural blast,—which blew right from the moor upon them. And from on high came a wild, hollow sound, as of a wild aërial pack of hounds in full cry in the upper regions of the night.

"Oh father!" Luned cried, "what are they?"

"Cwn Annwn!" His reply was dragged out of him in an uneasy voice, as he looked this way and that undecidedly; "the hounds of Annwn, hunting some lost soul to his perdition. I have done wrong to bring you here. Here, before you were born, we killed Howel's cousin, Qwilym Las. An evil night. We threw his body in the bog. Fair earth-sleep he never had. Let us go back,—there, another way!"

He turned, and began to lead his horse back to the fringe of stunted trees they had just passed. There he stopped at a fallen tree and was about to mount.

Luned kept close to him, struggling with her fears at the desolate bog, and the thought of the slain man, thrust still warm into that cold, unholly grave; when again there came the sound of an aërial yelping and shrieking over their heads.

Rhosser let go his horse's reins and fell on his knees, his arms up as if to protect his head,—crying aloud, "Trugarha! Trugarha!" (Mercy! Mercy!)

Luned's horse started, plunged violently, and then galloped off with her towards the bog, while her senses swooned. Unable to control him, she felt herself doomed, and soon she lost consciousness altogether.

VII.

GRINGOLET AGAIN.

WHEN she came to, she found herself, at early morning, looking up into the green, curled branches of an oak, while on her left, stooping a little, so as to look into her face, was an old herdsman.

There was no sign of her father. Three pitifully lean cows were the next things she saw, on the bank of a stream below. The herdsman was lean himself,—lean and gray, and curved like a quarter moon. He carried a long ashen crook much cut about with the notches which showed his herdsman's simple calculations. He straightened himself, like a loosened spring, with startling alacrity when she accosted him, and answered her in a voice full of sharp strength, surprising in one of his worn-out, attenuated aspect. Her first question was of her father, and then, as she sat up, she asked the herdsman whether she was far from Rhos.

"R-r-rh-os?" he said, rolling the word on his tongue: "there isn't any way to Rhos, unless you walk on the tree-tops! There," he pointed northwest, "lies Cors Du (Black Bog); there," he pointed direct east, "lies Mynydd Du (Black Mountain); there Afon Du (Black River); and there," and he crossed himself, "lies Rhos, and before you get there trust me if you don't meet the Black Hare that wretched these old cows! So," he concluded with a lifting of his gray crook, as she got on to her feet, "better go back the way you came,—ay, any way but to Rhos. The devil's at Rhos, Howel Farf is at Rhos. The Red-hand is on the door of Rhos. Myself know Howel's ways. I smell smoke when I think of him."

The old man sniffed the air as he said it, and added, "Would I wonder if Rhos was afire now?"

With that, giving one of the cows a blow with his crook over her lean flank, he went on his way towards a broken building that showed through the trees.

Luned was too discouraged to follow him and seek further aid or advice, especially as she saw an evil-looking dun-colored cur run out from the place and then disappear suspiciously, skirting the trees, as if for a flanking movement. She could see nothing of her horse, but she fancied she heard hoofs in the heart of the wood. She took a foot-path in that direction, which climbed over a knoll and then led off across a rough clearing of an oak wood, and so reached a hollow where a neglected chapel stood guard over a small, desolate graveyard.

Around the graveyard ran an old wall, entered by a broken wicket, beneath a yew-tree which spread itself there like a spot of night, so dense and sombre was its shadow. But one gleam of sun piercing through it found something tawny beneath the tree,—a horse surely, and of a ruddy, unusual hue. A few steps farther down and Luned was better able to see under the yew branches. And then she cried out in an ecstasy of surprise,—

"Gringolet!"

Upon hearing her voice, the eager creature struggled and broke away from the wicket where he was tethered, and came trotting up to her, a cross-bar of the broken wicket dangling from his rein.

He was quite wild with delight at finding her, thrust his nose into the fold of the tunic, walked all around her, and whinnied, and then drew deep sighs for pleasure, like any human being, as she threw her arms about his neck and fell to caressing him.

The noise of this meeting brought to the door of the chapel a boy in puce doublet and hose, who ran out to the gate with a soft "Halloo!"

"Perrot!—why, it is Perrot!" she said.

He took her two hands as she spoke, and looked up into her eyes with such child-like frankness of pleasure that she stooped and kissed

him. They sat on the broken wall of the graveyard, beside a birch-tree, and there Perrot burst forth into eager, excited chatter, telling his adventures since yesterday, when he left Castle Arberth. Gringolet, half jealous, tried restlessly the while to divert her attention to himself. As she listened, she found her fingers closing on a birch catkin, which had lain in a crevice of the stone since the autumn; and she was about to thrust it into Gringolet's mouth when she remembered that graveyard trees were said to be poisonous, so dropped it into her pocket instead.

The Knight of Kemes, began Perrot, had sent him to take Gringolet to the White Abbey. That was yesterday afternoon, when a warrant had reached Sir John Perrot, at noon, for the arrest of Rhosser and others with him on an old charge of treason. Fearing Gringolet would be seized if its owner's name leaked out, the Lord of Kemes had persuaded Sir John into this friendly action. But not finding Rhosser or her at the abbey, poor Perrot, who was ordered to deliver Gringolet into her own hands, had set out again, missed his way, straying to the northeast, and wandered for long hours in an unknown, desolate region of lonely moorlands. A gleam from a firelit door-way led him at length to a shepherd's hut of clay and wattle.

"When I looked in," said Perrot, in high-pitched, excited tones, "I said, 'Surely that is a witch-wife there.' 'Twas an old dirty wife sitting by a fire, in the mid of the floor, and two fierce great hounds sitting by her, black and bigger than ponies,—yes, sitting up like men, and looking into her pits of eyes. But when she saw me staring in she came at me, quick as a cat, and seized the reins and called me sharply by my right name. However she knew it I cannot tell, but know it she did, and scolded me by it. But she took thy little hackney, and stroked his nose, and made all the world of him. Afterwards she took me to the fire; and she told me how you and your dad were gone, and you left behind. She gave me some brewis for supper, and I slept on a fern bed by her fire. This morning, 'Go you,' says she, 'to a broken chapel in the glyn, and wait there till someone comes, the Master of Rhos,' she said, 'or his little squire.' But, Gray Tunie, tell me what is your real name?"

"No matter. Why do you look so?"

"I found the chapel, and I waited, but I was afraid of the graves, and I was sitting up there, on the bank, when I heard a noise, and there she was."

"Who?"

"The old wife."

"Malen! What did she say?"

"She said the men of Rhos, five of them, met the shrieve with two-score and more by the head-waters of Gwili at daybreak, and *he* was hurt."

"Who was hurt?—Rhosser, my father?"

"He was not hurt very much."

"My father?"

"They had to turn about; they had to beat back, I think."

"My father was hurt?"

"She told me nothing more, except that I was to wait here till she came back."

"Oh Perrot! what will my little moth' do? They will burn the house. We shall all be lost."

Even as she said it the May morning, that had opened so fair, appeared to change. The sky grew overcast as an uneasy, shifting southwest wind huddled clouds in ragged masses in all but the region of the north. The sun grew sick, and was soon blotted out; the trees became dark and restless about them; the very leaves shivered, as if in apprehension; and then a rumble, that sounded almost subterranean, came from afar, but as if it would say, 'I shall soon be near,' and heavy drops of rain fell.

They decided to fasten Gringolet under the lych-gate and take shelter in the chapel. They stood within the porch anxiously looking out. "If we went right in," said Perrot, "the old woman might not know we were here. I thought I heard many horses while riding in the wood," he added.

But neither horsemen nor Malen came at this juncture. Instead, a blast of the breaking storm swept with fury upon the glyn and the graveyard, and sheets of water, rent and tossed by screaming gusts of wind, were hurled upon the chapel.

"Aren't you afraid?" said Perrot's eyes, beseeching Luned's, as they both looked out at the storm.

But Luned said nothing. Her face, reflecting the stormy gray light of the rain-swept moorland, was filled with a pale anguish excited for others than herself. As soon as the storm lessened she would have left the place, but in the far distance they heard a bugle that blew two notes. "That is no Welsh horn," said Perrot; "that sounded like the Norman 'aux armes'! If we go now they may see us."

VIII.

THE MADNESS OF RHOSSEN THE WILD.

To the fury of the storm a cold mist of rain had succeeded, when they heard sounds of people approaching. Glancing out cautiously, they saw the new-comers. One, a tall horseman, bestrode a tall black horse. His brow was bound with a black scarf stained with blood, that served to enhance the pallor of his face, and the face, need it be said, was Rhosser's. At his side, a friar, tall too, but of a stride quite unequal

to the horse's paces, hastened along, gathering up with one hand the skirt of his rusty brown-serge frock. Nothing can make men look so wretched as being soaked with rain. Both men were drenched with it. The man on the horse, however, if he looked miserable, had a fierce and noble wildness, as he rode down to the chapel, that redeemed the taint of blood on his face and the dark streaks of wet on his garments. The friar looked like a man unused to hardship, and now become utterly wretched. He had a gentle, sensitive face, that Luned saw now for the first time. Rhosser held in his hand a naked sword, whose blade touched his fellow-wayfarer's gown more than once in their descent to the hollow; and this too did not tend, one may suppose, to the friar's reassurance.

Reaching the graveyard wicket, Rhosser pulled up within a pace or so of the rough mounting-block, and sheathing his sword, stiffly and painfully dismounted.

"Now," said he, in a loud, unnatural voice, that he directed upward, looking into the air, "we shall see, holy father;—shall Holy Church give me grace, or is there none for Welsh sinners whose sin is the sword? Let us in, then, while there is time. At the chapel we shall wait till my loiterers come up. I have let down too much of my blood, alone to relieve Rhos. But ere I cross the holy threshold let me add to the sins you shall sain within yet three oaths, of earth-death, blood, and fire, against the unclean, dog-faced, stuffed and padded shrieve of the De Spencers. May his soul blacken and rot with his dog's body for the black thing he has done this day!"

Perrot, as he saw Rhosser and the friar approach, had drawn Luned into the chapel, and his terror reacted in her. Remembering last night and the bog, she felt afraid of her father.

The storm had so darkened the day without that the interior had the effect of evening, and its gloom would have overwhelmed them but for its one eastern window. In those painted panes, neglected and dusty as they were, a red angel stood, and appeared to gather all the remaining light into his red garments, and to glow and wax more luminous in that the daylight around was the more solemnly declined.

The pair advanced timidly up the aisle, hand in hand, their eyes fixed on the red figure in the window. They saw that the angel had a sword in his hand.

"I wish he had no sword," whispered Luned.

Then it was that a more gracious figure, hanging on the Holy Rood on their right, caught their eyes, and it was behind this that they sought a shelter when they heard Rhosser's and his companion's steps crossing the threshold. One corner of the chapel was curtained off by way of sacristy, and hither the brown friar led Rhosser. The pair crouched behind the oaken rood caught hold of one another's hands as

they heard him unsheathe his sword and lay it naked on the stones by his side; then he began (in a voice muffled to a tone too low for them to hear) an intermittent confession of his sins. But gradually his voice grew louder, and then Rhosser, who had been kneeling, started to his feet. Seizing his sword and leaving the sacristy, he began to pace up and down the narrow aisle of the chapel, dragging the naked blade over the irregular stones with a harsh, jarring noise.

"No, no!" he cried, in reproachful tones. "Who are you, thin shadow, to bid me live, that would die, and die forever. There are torments of earth and fire; torments on torments; fire on fire; and below the fire, the deeps of that hell where the ice of the places of eternal cold waits to perish the heart. And you, pale people under these stones, do you know all the judgment, and the cold, eternal woe? For one I slew, calling Heaven and all the saints to help blot out his soul forever; and I cast him into the bottomless bog. Ha, ha! Gwilym, Gwilym Las, are you come, you and all your demons, upon me? Ha, they are come, they are upon me!"

Here Rhosser paused in the midst of the chapel-aisle, striking his sword now on the stones, now on some bench that came in his way in the dark. With this were heard softer sounds. It was the friar, passing along the wall towards the door. All the terror of the scene had repeated itself, plain to see, in his agonized face as, reaching the threshold and crossing himself, he stepped into the light of the gray day, and, passing the wicket, swiftly was gone.

But Rhosser, within, had broken into further outeries, after a pause in the violent blows of his sword.

"What am I to do, Red Michael? What am I to do? I am Rhosser. There is blood of princes in my heart. Every drop of it I will give to buy mercy. It is for my little daughter's sake,—her that I cannot spare. Oh, if there is a blood-stain on the heart of Rhosser, his blood shall atone for it. But my little daughter, Lin, she shall live, to eat sweet apples and sing carols at the *Plygain!** And she shall live to nurse a little babe, and call him Rhosser for love of me, and bring flowers to my grave every white Sunday to give me a little peace. For her sake will I forget the bog and its dead, and for her sake will I have Howel Farf's blood ere he hurt one hair of her, of Luned,—silly, pretty Lin. But who, who touched my arm,—who is here? Dead men or not, I will fight with ye all."

He started about and went back to the door, striking at the benches in a paroxysm of fury that left him exhausted. He was barely able to stagger into the curtained sacristy, apparently with the idea that the friar was still there. He sank upon a seat within it utterly spent, and

*A service held before dawn on Christmas Day.

thereupon quiet settled down upon the chapel, save for a piteous little noise from the other end, where Luned sat, her face buried in her hands.

In a little while, whispering to Perrot, "I must go to him," she dried her tears and took courage to leave her hiding-place. Perrot would have pulled her back, but she shook him off.

"It is my father," she said.

"Oh," said Perrot, greatly awed, "I did not know."

Thereupon she had slowly stolen towards the sacristy, Perrot following, when Rhosser himself, lifting the curtain of the enclosure, stood forth and held out a hand. "Who is this?" he asked. "Help me out to the light that I may see you."

She took his hand, she felt it burn in hers, and saw that he must be in high fever. A violent shiver shook him, as leaning on her, and unsteadily shouldering the door-posts as he passed, he staggered out into the porch.

"Ha!" was his first word, when they stood there without, "what hour is it? It is not yet afternoon, and yet I can barely see. Why, 'tis indeed my little squire; but how came she here? How did you come, how did you find me, little squire? and who is this youngster? Boy, why do you stare at me? Is my face bloody? There is an old rag-well yonder, under the bank. Its water shall cleanse me ere we ride on. But, by Arthur's three black nags, where is my black horse? Has the brown brother carried him off?"

Rhosser's horse was hidden by the wall of the graveyard. Rhosser advancing, one hand resting on Luned's shoulder, when he had made sure of this, sate himself down there. He was fearfully pale, and he took Luned's hand in his, and held it as if for comfort in his pain and exhaustion.

"Get him some water," she whispered to Perrot. "I saw an empty stoup in the chapel porch."

While Perrot went to get it, steps of men and horses were heard. They speedily reached the top of the bank, some dozen or more, four on horseback, armed with long swords, and all long-cloaked, with steel-bound leather caps, and bearing round targes of brass and hide. When they saw Rhosser they raised a shout of triumph.

"Hai! Hai, Hai!—rah, rah!"

Rhosser stood up, raised his right hand at the salute, and then resumed his seat, with a gesture that unwillingly admitted his weakness.

At the cry of the approaching troop, Luned had started as if she would gladly have escaped into hiding.

"Don't go, little squire!" said Rhosser thereupon, putting out his hand.

As the men came up, they ranged themselves in a rough semicircle about their leader as he sat on the wall, and began a lively debate over their adventure with the shrieve.

"What matter?" concluded Siams. "He'll sleep to-night in bog-water. Rob the Red has five crown for misguiding him."

This mention of the fatal bog was of ill effect on Rhosser. He stood and looked up into the air wildly, raising his hand as if he would speak.

"That blow he had," said one of the four, Elias Vawr, who had a hawk-face, enormous shoulders, and bandy legs, "has touched him close. Come, young squire, let us have him to the well, and hang his black bandage on the thorn-bush beside it." He slipped nimbly off his horse as he spoke, and went to Rhosser's aid. Luned had already caught her father's arm, and he straightened himself, waved Elias away, and set off along the graveyard wall to the rag-well.

An old, gnarled thorn-tree served as the guardian spirit of the well, and the torn, decaying votive rags depending from every knotted twig gave the tree an aspect of uncanny individuality, which in this dim light took the semblance of an old, bent, tattered hag. At that moment there rose up from behind the thorn what might have been in very truth its own creature, the actual figure of an old woman. When Luned would have spoken to her, she saw it was Malen, who, leaning forth from the well-side, on a level with Rhosser's head, and putting forth her hand, in a second had removed his leather cap and undone the black, blood-stained bandage below it, and strung the clout on the thorn-bush.

Then she took his arm. "Kneel now," she said; "night comes fast. This is the water must put out the fires of Rhos."

Luned shivered as she heard it, remembering the old herdsman's allusion that morning to the same thing.

Rhosser had knelt at Malen's instance, and then, bending his head, he suddenly plunged it right into the water. On withdrawing it, he lay down full length on the bank, and drank a long, deep draught.

"There," he said, getting up and shaking off the bits of clay and decayed leaf that adhered to his tunic, "that's stayed the blood and quenched the fire. My clout's on the thorn-bush, and my stricken head is clear enough to carry me to Rhos."

With that he gave a silver crown-piece to Malen, who dropped it in the well, while he marched off, catching Luned's arm lightly at the elbow, and convoying her along with him. He moved as if he had recovered all his energy.

During the following ride to Rhos, indeed, his energy went on growing until it was become manifestly that of a feverish brain. When at last they drew near, crossing the open moorland within a mile or two

of the house at nightfall, a flare of red light showed itself plainly before the walls.

At this, Rhosser cried to the four horsemen riding twenty paces behind him and to Luned to haste, in a tone vehement enough to be heard a mile away. He went riding on, furiously spurring and beating his horse, and crying, "*Deuch mlaen!*" (Come along!)

In consequence of this wild cry, when they pierced the ring of trees dividing the demesne of Rhos from the moorland, the lawns were to all appearance deserted. But a great fire burnt, ominous and lurid, under the arch of the great gate-way,—a fire that must have been fed within the last few minutes.

By this Rhosser, after calling from some motive of prudence to Luned to stay within shelter of the trees, was fifty yards in advance. He rode on at a furious gallop across the lawn, quite alone, crying, "Oh, Howel, Howel! Ho, Howel Farf!"

As he spurred on, against the glare, towards the fiery gate, Luned thought she saw a face at the shot-window, in the round tower left of the gate, and heard distinctly her mother's voice bidding Rhosser back. But he rode on, although immediately after the cry a quick, spurting shower of bolts went flying about him and his horse.

The bolts came from the grove of oaks to the right of the house, but Rhosser paid no heed to them. His one idea was to get to the gate and the fire in the gate-way, burning there so mysteriously and wickedly. But when he was a dozen horse-lengths of it the silence was broken by a crash. The gate had collapsed within the arch. The gate-way lay yawning open across the flames; and Luned's heart leaped, and she cried out in an access, half of terror, half of admiration, when she saw Rhosser, his speed unabated, spur his horse right through the fierce flames and disappear in the court beyond.

As he did so, his four nearest followers, who had sighted Howel's bowmen on the right, made a swift detour, skirting the trees to surprise them. Luned was thus left alone; and she had decided in her eagerness to ride after Rhosser, when she heard a horse's chain rattle close by her.

"Hey?" said a keen, fine voice, "what young cockerel crowed here?"

Ere she had quite turned her head, doubting what she heard, the speaker was right across Gringolet's path, and had caught his rein. And then, as the horseman leaned from his saddle, she noted how from his handsome, pale face depended a bush of black beard; and then she felt herself lost indeed.

"Well," said Howel, "what have we here?"

But she was too frightened to reply.

IX.

LUNED MAKES JESTYN'S ACQUAINTANCE.

So, within a stone's throw of the house, just as she felt its genial presence already closing, homelike and kind, about her, Luned fell into Howel's clutches. She had almost felt her mother's breath on her face, had recalled her way of saying, "But, child, you are not thinking of your thread, but of Gringolet;" or, "Sh, child! maids have to be cleverer, because they are not going to be men," when, instead, there came Howel's cruel voice like a knife in her ear.

He had seized on her, as it proved, without quite knowing what his capture amounted to. And, as it happened, two more of his men came up, dragging poor Perrot along, just as he had demanded of Luned who the devil she was. She perceived, even as he asked, that everything depended on his not finding it out. So she stifled the sob of rage which rose in her throat at his question, bit her lip, and then—how it was she never knew, but between her anger, her desire not to let her tears betray her and her sex, she found herself making an awful school-girl's grimace at him.

"What's the Welsh for that?" cried Howel, smiling in spite of himself, and added, calling to his men, "Leave the other imp: this one is better worth while. We will take him as hostage. Hold his reins till I call off my cross-bows."

He raised his horn and blew the retreat, and the mad hubbub of his men in retreat, the running and hallooing of those footmen of Rhosser who were but now coming up, the cries of women, and rattling of pails, and seething water in the flames, all tended to confuse Luned. She did not in this confusion at first notice the erect, knightly young man, wearing a black surcoat, silver broidered, above his steel vest, who had ridden up on a sign from Howel, and taken Gringolet's reins from the begrimed rascal in borrel and sheepskin to whom Howel had first handed them. But she felt for her dagger, thinking to strike off the young man's hold, as he rode alongside, calmly urging on the two horses away from Rhos, away from home! The young man did not look formidable; his eye was gentle as it met hers; but he said, with a slight bow, "Better not, else—" He nodded therat significantly towards Howel, who was riding on fast in advance. Luned had no idea, however, of going off so tamely.

Crying, "Help, help!" at the top of her voice, she felt for the dagger the Lady of Llanfair had given her, and in a twinkling had drawn it and struck the young man's arm with all her might. Alack! below his black shoulder-sleeves his arms were defended by scales of steel, and her dagger jarred, bruising her own hand as much as it did his arm. Hurt or not, he took not the slightest notice of it; and this

coolness of his disconcerted her more than any violence. Unluckily, too, Howel had turned at her cry for help, as a last quivering gleam of fire reached them. He put two gauntleted fingers to his mouth, so as to part his black beard and show his teeth. "Tell him, Jestyn, if he does that again he will be gagged," he said, dropping a stride or two till they came up with him.

They were now already pressing out from the immediate inner demesne of Rhos, and the fire's dying down, or not reaching beyond the trees here, they emerged in darkness on a rough meadow, riding on a line with the waterside below the place. Every stride they took farther away sent down Luned's spirits; and to add to her discomfiture, Howel, keeping at Jestyn's side, began to converse with him in low tones, and she felt, beyond a doubt, they were talking about her.

At this time the household of Rhos were not aware that she was missing. Some of Rhosser's men were still out, and the startling advent of Rhosser in the court-yard had diverted their thoughts. The bolt that had whipped off his steel cap would not have hurt him had it not been for his sword cut, that was only stanched, not healed. As it was, it had set the blood streaming slowly down his neck and shoulder by the time he pulled up his horse in the court-yard. The watchful little Lady of Rhos was already out and at his side. When she had caught his hand, then, she cried, "Oh Rhosser, Rhosser man; you have saved us: but where is the little one?"

He nodded towards the gate: "They are all behind there, Mari! But we must get the fire down, ere the draught through the gate-way blows it into the place."

He himself dismounted, and, refusing any remedy for his own hurt, set-to to quench the fire. Some of his men coming up, and hallooing across the flames to say there was no water without, he called for spades, and throwing these out to them, bade them shovel on earth and sods from the grass-plots on either side. This, and the pails of water from within, soon allayed the fire, which had only partly destroyed the great iron-bound gate and blackened the stone of the posts and the arch above.

But as the fire died down, the beseeching figure of a small boy was seen running to and fro there. It was Perrot, who had been trying in vain to get the men without to listen to him, and was now gesticulating excitedly across the rank smoke and dying flames.

Rhosser, catching a glimpse of him, divined that something was wrong.

"Jump the fire!" he called across to him.

Perrot, nothing daunted, made a bold spring, and escaped with singed hose.

"Where's the little squire?" asked Rhosser.

"Gone, gone!" said Perrot, breathless.

"Gone!" Rhosser gripped his collar.

"Yes, that devil,"—he sobbed, afraid of Rhosser's fierce eyes,—
"that devil with the black beard carried her off."

Rhosser's fury at this was all but fatal to him. The blood streamed over his face. He ran across the court-yard to get his horse, stumbled, righted himself, stumbled again, putting his hands to his head, and fell headlong at last within half a dozen paces of the beast. And now poor Luned's chances grew fainter, for Rhosser's predicament was such that for the moment they thought him dead.

His wife had seen him fall, and was already wiping away the red stream, stanching the wound. She called two men over to help her, and together, for she would let none but herself touch his poor head, they bore him into the hall; Perrot followed, his mouth opened with a round "O" of pity and terror.

X.

CHATEAU BRANLANT.

WHEN the Lady of Rhos could lift herself from the bandaging and laving at Rhosser's dreadful pillow, on the floor of the hall, she called for Elias. But the maids brought news that he and three other horsemen had already gone in pursuit.

But however it came about, Elias and his party of pursuers missed Howel Farf and his men. On the north side of Sarthi, below Rhos, there is a good league's space of soft boggy ground, with here and there a drier spot, and, riding this by night, horsemen would not easily be tracked. Howel had divided his men into two parties, the second of which included himself and Jestyn. Convoying Luned, they rode fast and found their way an hour or more beyond midnight to Castle Meyric.

Like the Sarthi, the small river Sawddë that flows past Castle Meyric has boggy as well as rocky, torrent-like passages in its career. The bog above Castle Meyric was a troublesome one to cross, but they succeeded in finding a passage, dark though the night was. Coming to the castle, however, they found a moat about it, little better than a bog-hole, full of bog-water. Into this Howel Farf's horse, a wilful beast, carried him, and floundering about, so splashed him from head to foot, ere by good hap it got a footing, that he was well drenched.

"What the devil," he cried, "does the Lady Cymeida mean by keeping such a puddle round her crazy walls?"

Meanwhile Jestyn was calling out that the drawbridge was rotten. "Better go farther, even if we ride all night."

"*Pwt!*" said Howel, "we will find a way in. We shall lie snug here as anywhere."

Thereupon he blew his horn softly, and called out vigorously,

"Gate! Gate!" At first this had no effect, and he grew impatient. He cursed Jesty, who sate yawning there on his horse, for not being a more active agent.

"A miser's bed, full of fleas," said Jesty; "I'd rather take a barn in the village below. In truth, sire, 'tis not worth it."

In reply, Howel blew his horn again, and thundered, and knocked, and cried out.

At length a most disconsolate, meagre voice cried from a shot-window in the tower,—

"Who is there?"

"Howel Farf, by God! Let us in! I am wet through." He contrived to put a world of mischief into his tones. "Let us in, or we'll have the door down. We have three-score men waiting over the bog."

Some moments passed. Then the same person returned, and the same thin voice asked how many there were with him that wished to enter, and Howel replied, "Three!"

And then it was that a miserable old servitor, after much working at the chains of the drawbridge, disclosed himself in the gate by holding up a lantern with a feeble light.

The drawbridge had more than one great hole in it. They dismounted to cross.

"Where's your sweet lady, Mistress Cymaida?" asked Howel, as they entered the narrow court-yard.

"She is abed, my lord;—fast asleep since candle-dusk, most noble sieur!" said the old man.

"Call her up!" said Howel, with a cheerful brutality of tone which impressed Luned profoundly. "I am soaked with your dirty bog-water, and we want some supper, and I want to be beguiled—hum, hum!—by the sight of her fair face once again ere I die. Call her up, you old rascal, and send a groom to put our horses in and a maid to wash our smoky faces. Lord knows we need it! we have rid through fire as well as bog-water to-night."

The old man made some attempt, grumbling the while, to take charge of two of the horses, while Luned held Gringolet's head.

"What does he say?" asked Howel.

"He says," replied Jesty, "thus—he is the groom and he is the maid. What a place! *Quel chateau branlant!* Look at the crazy wall!"

"Ay," said Howel, "the old earthquake did that,—the same which bit a piece out of Tal-y-Llychau Abbey."

Stunned by all she had gone through, hurt to the heart by this last wrench away from home, Luned had barely wit enough to carry off her rôle without betraying herself.

As she stood at Gringolet's head, trying in the darkness to catch a look of his friendly eye, she saw that he too was dead-beat, and hung

his head with an air, half sick, half sulky. He was the only friend she had left; what if he too turned away from her now? The stables were foul and fusty, where she led Gringolet in after the other horses, and when the old servitor lighted them to the house they found that little better. The hall within was cavernous and narrow; its air struck chill as they entered. The furniture was meagre, with no attempt at order or comfort. The rushes on the floor were rotten; and here and there a sheep-skin, badly dressed and malodorous, added to the taint of the air.

"*Hwbub!*" cried Howel, "what an unhallowed sweet smell."

A seed of red-ash lingered among the embers on the wide hearth, but there was no wood near at hand. The old servitor set a rush-light from the lantern on a spiked stand, and lit it, and then set off slowly again, shuffling across the floor, to call his mistress.

Luned, smitten with her own fate, sat at the hearth-side, staring stupidly at the curved back of a gaunt hound that, after growling at them, had returned to lie as near the embers as it could. The effect of this starved creature, and all this woe-begone interior, was to discourage every hope. "I am miserly and miserable!" it seemed to say.

At length a step announced from the stone staircase the form of a tall, lean woman, with a sullen, sallow face, very small and round, on the top of a long, straight neck. She wore a rusty, furred, dirty-white Bristol gown, with black braid, and an old hunting-bonnet of her brother's covered her curly, abundant gray hair, fluffed out about her head. Her voice was masculine, harsh, humorous. She bowed with rapidity, opening and shutting her hands as she approached, and then saluted Howel, kissing him on either cheek, with the pecking motion of some unheard-of bird. Then she descended upon Luned, and at the same time began a running string of explanations, questions, and grumbles at being called out of bed.

"I am getting old, Farf, getting old, and I need my sleep. To come at such an hour! Why not have come in time for a sewin stewed in Burgundy, or a hot pig pastry at the hour of supper. Now there is nothing. No," continued the lady, who had completed an inquisitive round of the trio, and patted Luned familiarly on the cheek,—"no, nothing save a dish of 'faggots' and a cold pig's cheek. Daffy, set them on for these gentlemen, and the Caerphilly cheese, and the dried raisins, and a flask of Burgundy. What! no Burgundy? then the elder, and—and—the beer."

"Cider? Beer?" cried Howel; "what extravagance, and what a feast! But we will eat even 'faggots,' hot or cold, and drink what we can get, my lady!"

As he spoke, he turned to Jesty with a nod of contempt. It should be explained that "faggots" make a dubious dish formed from pig's

liver,—minced and spiced and rolled up into a little sausage,—a poor man's dainty, with more of the savor than the substance of meat about it. During the repast the table was sadly lit by two tallow candles, which had been added to the rush-light, and languished in a couple of tarnished silver candelabras fitted with twenty great candles. Howel Farf kept bandying sarcastic allusions with his hostess, who was quite his match. Occasionally he ventured a thrust at Jesty, who made, Luned noticed, little attempt to retort. He turned to Luned, who had been attracting now and again the attention of their hostess:

“Did you ever taste ‘faggots’ before, Master Perrot? or drink ‘chwitafad’ (small liquor)? Not at Arberth? Eh?”

Luned mournfully shook her head.

“Ah,” continued Howel, “you see, my lady, the young rascal is both tired and scant of words. Who would think he was so hot a young devil, to look at him? Ran away from school at Harford, stole a pony, spitted a shrieve’s officer, rode, flew, leagues, and was found toasting a maid at a tavern at Cas-newydd. Then they sent him to me, as being a notorious moral guide to youth.” And he laughed softly.

Luned continued to shake her head, too frightened to speak, at these fanciful embroideries of her history.

But the effect of this tribute to her character upon the lady was singular. She nodded and smiled at the supposed young squire.

“Ha, ‘tis *un beau galant*,” she kept saying,—“*un beau galant*.” And presently she rose from her seat, and going to a corner cupboard took out a packet of candied plums. She presented Luned with a couple, kissed her on the forehead, and patted her cheek with an air of approbation amusing enough to behold. However, Luned in her simplicity was grateful for any kindness, and instantly formed the resolution of throwing herself on the lady’s mercy.

Howel Farf, when he saw the little passage between the two, slapped the table and laughed. “Nay,” he cried, “take care, Lady Cymeida! he is a rascal, and will readily steal your heart and spite your fair face!”

Mistress Cymeida laughed, and her laugh was amazing. Set going, it went through three discharges of an extraordinary resonance. Meanwhile her face betrayed no sign of amusement, save in its round, wrinkled mouth.

“But,” she said, “but, Master Perrot, tell me—tell me how you came to run away and play the prodigal?”

To the lady’s astonishment, Luned instantly left her seat and threw herself on her knees before her.

“Oh!” she cried, “take pity on me! I am not Perrot: I am no young squire: I am but a maid, daughter of Rhosser of Rhos. It is but to-night that my uncle and his men have taken me from Rhos. Pray give me shelter to-night, and let me go back to-morrow!”

She stifled a sob as she clutched Lady Cymeida by the knees. Her pretty, frightened face, as she turned it up, was so obviously a girl's, with all a girl's piteous extremity of terror and emotion, it would have melted a very hard heart to look at it.

But Mistress Cymeida had no feeling for a girl. She calmly pushed Luned away.

"Do not come clawing me!" she said; "do not weep at me! It's no good. Here, Howel Farf, take away the little cat. What do you bring such things here for?"

"Rhosser's daughter!" cried Howel in astonishment. "Upon my sword, I swear she took us all in. By Mari!" she makes a pretty boy too! Here, pretty niece—young lady! don't mind the old woman!" he said, going to her, and lifting her up with much show of courtesy. "You shall be sent back to Rhos in a day or two. You are tired now, and shall to bed in the best chamber!"

"Ah indeed!" said Mistress Cymeida. "Perhaps you would like me to lend her my best murrey gown too?"

Howel laughed, and said in his mocking tone :

"Madam, your best murrey gown best becomes you, but this young lady prefers, as you see, a sadder set of feathers! Will you show her to the guest-chamber, which I know for a safe and high one? She has but two or three hours to sleep, and for that time Jestyn and I will watch here. At daybreak we must ride."

"Whither?" said their hostess sharply.

Howel displayed his hands, as much as to say, "That is my affair."

Luned's last impression of him that night as she looked back from the stair was to see him bowing low, dipping his black beard almost to his toes. As for Jestyn, by him she felt even more embarrassed. He stood behind his uncle, bowing too; one hand on his heart, an expression, a smile that puzzled her, on his hitherto impassive face. What did it mean? It seemed intended to convey that there was some sort of understanding between them.

She preferred if anything the rudeness of Mistress Cymeida, who gave her a push into a lofty chamber, and putting a taper into her hand, departed with a masculine ahem! of contempt.

As soon as she had gone, Luned bolted the door, and having examined the window and found it far from the ground and impossible of escape, threw herself, fully clad, on the bed. She slept heavily, thanks to her youth and health, though the bed was damp and the room mouldy. When a thumping at her door roused her early next morning she felt she had only slept for a moment.

XI.

LUNED'S ESCAPE.

In fact, only some two hours of sleep in all were Luned's on that disordered night. The chill of the bog and the waters about the house made her shiver into full wakefulness when she felt her way down the stair into the court-yard in the early May dawn, listening disconsolately to the bewildering chorus of birds in the Llangadock trees. She saw no more then of Lady Cymeida ; and she lacked spirit, in her hunger and tiredness, to make any appeal to Howel till they had ridden some miles.

Then, on a polite request from him to increase Gringolet's pace, she found herself flushing with anger and crying: "Why do you take me away ? I want to go home to Rhos. Why do you not let me go home, sir?"

To this question Howel replied, smiling evasively, "You shall,—in a day or two. Ay, you shall go home like a lady, in a yellow gown and a gold girdle."

This was when they were riding along the river flats opposite Dynevor on their way down the vale of Towy. Baffled by his unctuous but impassive smile, she said nothing more then, but turned to scan Jestyn. Her suspicions were too strong to let her credit courtesy in his bearing towards her ; but she could not help asking herself if his dark, melancholy eye, when it caught hers, really kindled to a livelier gleam ; or if the faint quiver of his lips was a sign as little to be depended upon as Howel's perplexing smiles. But once, when her uncle was riding some twenty paces ahead, and a couple of sheep-dogs, who had run out from a sheep-cote, were making noise enough to cover his words, Jestyn accosted her, and to her surprise in French.

"Sweet demoiselle," he said, "'twere as well you humored your uncle. Believe me, he purposes you no great ill, and I hope to have the felicity of escorting you presently to Rhos. Till then, pray you look brave and careless when he may speak, and count on me at all times, if you will, as your most loyal chevalier." He ended abruptly with a bow, as Howel showed signs of slackening pace now to let them come up with him. After this, Howel gave them no opportunity of further talk, for he studiously maintained his place on Gringolet's left.

The sun mounted hot and clear, and Gringolet's flanks showed a dark streak or two, and the other horses gave signs of flagging, so hard did Howel keep the pace, by the time they skirted Llangunnor hill, avoiding Carmarthen town. As Luned recognized the white castle-walls over the river and the water-meadows, she realized how far afield they were travelling, and she grew desperate. She resolved then, if

she could, to break away,—trusting to Gringolet to carry her faster than they could follow,—if any chance at all should offer.

It was quite three miles farther on before any chance offered. They had come to a high stretch of furzy-land, with a multitude of geese feeding, when, as they were passing one flock, Howel's saddle slipped, the belly-band giving way, and he dismounted, calling halt.

At the word Luned wheeled about, and Gringolet, excited by the geese, became seized with a spirit of mischief. The gander of the flock, leading a siffling and gabbling chorus against him, gave him a good excuse. He reared, kicked, trumpeted; and then Luned, seeing her opportunity, urged him off at a wild canter down the common, making for what looked to be a green by-road leading off towards a grange by the river. Gringolet, she knew, was fleet,—fleeter, if he was not over-tired from his late hard usage, than the other horses. Unluckily, the by-road proved deceptive, and ended abruptly in a tangled, briar-grown spinney, with a soft swamp in its midst, where Gringolet plunged about, and finally gained a precarious footing just as Jestyn came up in hot pursuit.

There followed a parley. "That was unwise, demoiselle," cried out Jestyn: "Why did you not trust me?" He had reined up on the edge of the swamp.

"You keep me prisoner," she said, with a hot cheek and a quivering lip, looking round as she spoke for some way of escape,—"you and my uncle: How can I trust you?"

"Believe me, I serve you best by being of your escort. Consider it fairly. I am entirely at your service, but I counsel you, for the sake of your sweet face and its fortune, to humor your uncle."

"Humor him," she said, "I would kill him if I could. And you—you are a coward, else you would help me."

"Nay, sweet lady," said the young man, flushing in his turn, "he is my guardian. I may not kill him, but I might help you. Agree now,—let me counsel you from my heart, and on my sword-oath,—agree now to all he may propose. I will not hold you bound by any bond he may appoint as between you and me."

"Indeed," said she, with her girlish anger still hot in her, "you do me favors, sir, in advance. When my uncle has something to offer, I'll try to decline it."

The noise of her uncle's approach made her end this speech with undignified haste. She saw a chance of struggling out of the swamp on the other side, and bent over Gringolet's head, chirruping and urging him forward. The one glance she cast back gave her a glimpse of Jestyn nodding to her, and making a show of urging his own horse into the rushes and the duck-weed. Was he winking at her escape? She could not feel sure. As she extricated herself and Gringolet

she heard a frightful plunging in the swamp. She did not hear what Howel said to Jestyn as their horses were struggling there.

"Pigsny! but she is a splendid minx. I love her, by God! She is too good for you, Jestyn. But she shall not slip me. A maid of spirit,—ay, too good for you, and too good to waste in the wilds of Rhos. Come, Jestyn, we must catch her, and she must be married ere to-morrow's sun sets."

Reaching firm ground, Luned had meanwhile found a road through an oak-wood, and safely crossed a dingle without hearing anything of their pursuit. Thereafter she and Gringolet, rather at a loss, went floundering about in some farm lanes, that ended by leading her round a magpie's ring of some two or three miles. Then she reached a cote, where a shepherd put her on the right road for Carmarthen.

A couple of miles more, and she sighted the castle over the river and the bridge,—a pleasant sight, with a drove of black cattle crossing it to the town. She trembled for her disguise as she crossed, but by using Howel's name freely, and saying she came on shrieve's business, she gained entrance behind the cattle-drove to the water-gate. A parley followed with an inquisitive, cheese-faced Flemish warder, who delayed her till she had the wit to drop a silver shilling in his hand. Worst of all, as she rode on she was alarmed to hear a horseman following, who must have reached the gate immediately behind her. She was afraid to betray her suspicions by looking round. But when she had gone half the distance of the street within the gate, the horseman called "Hai, Gray Tunic!" She did not need to turn, for she recognized Howel's voice, and, recognizing it, saw his black beard and self-conscious smile as clearly as if he held Gringolet's bridle.

XII.

DOCTOR IAGO.

"You have lost a gaudy day and a world of giddy pleasures. Silly maid! You have forgot the yellow gown and the girdle!" So cried Howel, riding up on her left, and laughing angrily in his black beard. "Where are you running to now?"

"To Rhos," said Luned, turning away from him, erecting her head, and speaking as bravely as she could.

"Rhos? You are in a great hurry, it seems. A pretty boy you'd make, to throw away all your chances of seeing the joyous life about you!"

"I want to go home," repeated Luned.

"Well, then, my pretty niece,—such is my good humor,—home you shall go."

She looked at him doubtfully.

"Come," he said, "you must not be seen in the place in this guise. You look like a runaway. I'll put you in good hands. You shall still have the gown, and you *shall* go to Rhos."

"Now?"

"To-night." It rang aloud in his most positive note.

"Now is not to-night," she said. "If I went now, I could be there ere night. You said '*now*,' sire."

"As soon as it is safe,—after dark. The country-side is in arms; by day your pretty face would be a mark for bolts. But you shall harbor here till nightfall, in the house of an old physician and gentleman, Iago, who lives hard by. And he shall give you a potion to heal your father of his hurt. Think of that! All the world, from Caer to Caer, knows the fame of Iago. But remember, niece (for here is his house in the Darkgate), he is a misogynist."

"What is that?"

"A hater of all womankind, but especially maids. Whatever you do, breathe not a word to make him think you are one."

They soon reached the house; an arched way led to its door, within a court-yard with walls newly whitewashed. In the middle of each wall was a boldly drawn serpentine symbol in black paint.

An old serving-woman opened the door to them. She swallowed her words in explaining that the physician was not at home. She looked terrified at Howel's notorious black beard.

"Then we will wait him," he said.

They had barely seated themselves within a narrow tiled chamber when they heard a halting step without.

"It is Iago," ejaculated Howel, rising. "Do not forget that your name is Perrot," he added for Luned's benefit, as he left her, closing the door carefully after him as he went to meet the physician.

"Whom have you there?" asked Iago, looking at the closed door, after bowing with much ceremony to Howel.

"A patient—a pupil if you will. 'Tis a nephew of mine, a lad of some spirit and more fancies." He tapped his head significantly.

"Boys *do* have fancies," said Iago, looking perplexed.

"Yes, yes. But this one thinks to play the imp. He ran away from home because his father, Rhosser, would have him study for the church."

"When was he born?" asked Iago, putting on a professional air.

"*Pwt!* ask him. He must to sea with you,—and you must sail to-night. I have news that my dear cousin, Morgan of Dinas Moryn, is ill. He must not die, not yet; and only you can save him. You shall go, and take this pupil with you. A boy's berth aboard my bark,—she lies now at the quay,—and a boy's lack of comforts, and a few weeks of your plaguy doctrines and Morgan's conversation in that solitary sea-

house of Dinas Moryn, will bring him to. For 'tis a maidish lad, given to tears and puling. You can cure tears, Iago,—you can cure anything. Hey? 'Tis a good notion! An old wife shall go with you, lest they say woman's cares were lacking to the sick man of Moryn or to the youngster."

"But," protested Iago, "I cannot——"

"You can, you can; you *shall*. Hearken! In that sea-house are all the drugs, scales, furnaces, and porcelain pans and mortars, and what not besides, of the famous Florence quack who was being carried to London to heal the King's mother. There, at Dinas, they were wrecked. His famous black book is there, and all his sextants, rules, and little ladders to the moon. They are yours, and a thousand crowns besides, and the fee-simple of this house,—and more besides,—if you sail to-night, and save Morgan, and bring this wanton boy back to his right wit."

"But, sire, I must see him first," said Iago. "And why so eager to take his father's cloak to your back?"

"His father, Rhosser, is clean mad, and the De Spencers already covet his lands. If his distemper reaches Norman ears, Rhos will be lost to my sister and our family,—and this boy. We must get him away and in all haste, Iago, as the lad is touched, I fear, with his father's distemper. So, I pray, be humorous, for *he* needs art. Humor him, as you know how, in his conceit; humor him, and call him—Perrot!"

"Perrot? Why Perrot? He is not of kin to the Perrots."

"'Tis his own conceit to be so called."

He went to the door to disclose the supposed boy at this point.

It opened, unluckily for Luned, at the moment when, seized with the panic at the thought of Howel's further designs upon her and his power over her mind, she had attempted to escape.

She was retreating from another and inner door which she had opened, only to find fresh terrors within,—a skull on a shelf, a live tortoise moving on the floor, and various uncanny surgical appliances.

"A mischief!" murmured the physician, looking annoyed: "That is my oratory!" He frowned at them both, his eyes askance, looking towards its entrance.

Luned saw in him a slender old man, in a rich but soiled velvet gown, its breast stuck all over with pins,—little silver pins, large rusted iron pins, copper pins. He carried an ivory stick, with the same serpentine symbol carved in black and white ebony on its top that she had noted on the wall without. His face, when she dared to scrutinize it more closely, was a nervous one,—a pale, high brow and pale-blue dreamer's eyes kept guard on thin, irritable, twitching lips.

Howel laughed. "A lad of spirit, you see. Keep your eye on him,

Master Iago, till the time for your sailing. Till then, adieu! You will be safe, Perrot, in Iago's hands." And he was gone.

That night, at Carmarthen quay, but one vessel,—two-masted, with towering, bulging bows,—of the three or four moored there, was making ready to sail with the tide. In truth, an hour after sunset the weather looked foul. A gusty southeast wind, with rain in it, was whipping up the Towy and making the flood current uneasy. When the dark fell, lanterns began to flit between the town and this one vessel.

"Are ye sailing, Capt'n?" said the ale-wife at the door of the "Ship" Tavern, whence a reddish glow of firelight made a track across the broken quay to his ship moored just opposite.

"Why not?" asked the Captain, pushing into the passage. "Is the old wife come?"

"Sitting by the fire, there, see, nursing herself. I would not take a keg of the blessed water, worth a hundred crowns a hogshead, to sail with her."

"Why that?"

"Has a witch's eye on her!"

The Captain made his way in to the hearth. There, a shawl over her head, moodily staring into the flame and moving the embers with one foot, sat Malen.

She turned as he approached:

"Ask me none of your sailor's tips or hiring-fair questions," she said; "I know what you want, and I'm going with you, Cap'n!" Her voice was edged; she spoke with a mind made up.

"How much do you want?" he asked.

"As much as I can get. I heard what the ale-wife said. But I'm a decent soul, and luck is your ship's name if you take me. If not,—see this!" she stooped, and picked up a red-hot cinder, and touched the sailor's hand with it.

He flinched, and muttered a curse: "What do you mean, woman?"

"Mean?" she laughed, and spat in the fire. "That's enough, and I know enough to bring you into the black vault at Cas'newydd! Who fired the abbot's house beyond Porthcawl,—hey?"

"Blood of man!" said he. "Old woman, you have had too much mead. Get on board with you if you would go to Dinas. There's a crown for ye, and another every day, and your keep while you stay; and nothing to do for it but tend the old doctor, Iago, and his' prentice that goes with him, and his patient at Dinas. But don't let Howel Farf see you. He knows ye too well."

"And I know *him*, and don't care much to see his black beard," she said, and, rising, went out and boarded the ship.

She had barely found her way over the plank by the light of two lanterns placed on the quay some twenty paces apart, when two laden packhorses arrived. The lanterns gave a light poor and flickering through their horn shields, and made the quay and its flags wet with the falling rain look but more dismal as a party of three persons, oddly assorted, arrived afoot upon the scene—an old, slender man, much muffled, a black-bearded, stalwart man, and a third that passed for a slender youth, wearing a gray tunic. The last looked anxiously about, and seemed inclined to hang back.

"Come on, boy," said Howel; "here's the horse I promised you." And he boarded the vessel.

"Where are you taking me?" cried poor Luned, holding back.

"To Rhos. Come, niece. As I love you, 'tis the only way left. The country is up between here and there. The Captain will see you and Iago put ashore at Llanstephan ferry, where an escort awaits you. And Iago will to Rhos with you, and there heal your poor father."

Luned looked uneasily about her. She would have questioned Iago, but he was already gone below.

"All aboard!" cried the Captain. "Now, sire!"

Howel pushed her gently forward and then stepped nimbly back. The planks were cast off. "Good-by, Perrot," he cried; "good-by, Gray Tunic. Listen to your master of medicine; and, mind you, his life is pledge for yours. Let him so much as lose sight of you,—and his black velvet shall tangle in the teeth of the sea-worms off Dinas Moryn. Halloo! but who comes here?"

She saw him turn, between the two lanterns, as the ship's head, let go, swung round with the tide.

A horseman rode up at a gallop on to the quay and right past Howel, whom he did not seem in his haste to have noticed.

"Stay!" he cried, "stop a moment!" The voice sounded familiar.

"Off ye go, Cap'n!" cried Howel in turn.

"Stay," repeated the other.

"*Pwt!*" cried Howel again, seizing the horse by its bridle. The horse reared; in the lantern-light Luned saw its rider's face gleam. Then, as the ship swung clear, one cry for help escaped her,—

"Jestyn!"

The ship glided quietly out on the dark current, and a black curtain seemed to be drawn between it and the shore. It was a small house perched on the river wall at the lower end of the quay. She was still staring at it when a hand touched hers.

"Come, Perrot," said the old physician, "it is better below. Though the ship is foul enough, the night is like to be fouler."

She could think of nothing better but to follow, asking, however, as she went when they would reach the ferry.

Iago mumbled, "Soon, soon," as he led on.

The cabin was full of dreadful wandering odors of bilge and pitch.

"There is a vapor given off in the belly of the ships," said Iago to her, observing her disgust, "that is a deep purple in color by night and a pale blue by day. By night it doth poison the head, and by day the lungs. It is so baneful that women have been known to die from its inhalation. Men, never. This is because the blood of the male is of a more sanguineous intensity. Be thankful, Master Perrot, son of man, that you were not born a maid."

Luned glanced uneasily at his face as he concluded this last sentence. Her sense of the injustice done her sex might, under other circumstances and in her own proper colors, have wrung a retort from her. But now a fresh waft of the vapor, whose properties he had so subtly described, reacting upon nerves already overtired, threatened speedily to carry her into the region where philosophy and its arguments are useless.

Iago was hastily concocting a draught in a small pewter cup. "Here, take it, and drink," he said, when it was well stirred with the blade of his lancet; "this may save us both from sea fever."

Whether he drank a similar draught she did not care to inquire. Hers proved powerful. Within a few moments she found herself trying to ask if they were near the ferry, and failing, in her overwhelming drowsiness, to collect her words. She could recollect nothing more of that evening or of the night that followed until she was hurriedly and uncomfortably wakened from a distempered sleep in the hammock which she had occupied. Harsh voices were shouting above. A chink of the panel in her cabin let a thread of light through. When she had fully roused herself, the unusual stillness of the vessel and the strangeness of all her surroundings put her into a pitiful perplexity.

"Come!" said a voice, and there was a step at her door.

"Is it the ferry?" she called out.

The cabin door opened. There stood the physician, twisting a black kerchief round his throat, a lamp on the floor at his feet. "Come!" he said, "we must land."

Still thinking of the ferry, she was surprised, when they had come upon deck, to see a dark, sharp horn of land to right and left, too indeterminate, however, to be clearly mapped out in one's mind. But it was quite unlike, she could discern, Llanstephan water and the ferry there. She heard plainly beyond the two horns, on either side, a short, loud surf breaking, although here the water was very still. They appeared to be at anchor in a narrow creek.

The air was chill, after the heavy air of the cabin, and a light sun-mist was falling. Luned tried in vain to strangle her yawns, begotten of cold and weariness, and to keep her teeth from chattering. The

physician was closely wrapped in a long cloak, symbol of the wrapping of his own thoughts, in which he appeared to be lost.

He said not a word to her. The Captain was giving orders over the side of the vessel into the darkness there. Two seamen were scuffling trunks into a boat alongside; but to Luned it seemed the Captain held conference with the powers of darkness.

At this point it was she grew aware of another figure standing immediately behind the physician, a mere black shadow among the shadows on the deck. Luned saw it was a woman, and she felt in some half-defined way that her presence there was a friendly one.

The physician's attention was also drawn to this figure. He turned and said,—

“Who are you?”

“I am the woman.”

Her voice produced a flutter of emotions in Luned's heart. Its tones called up associations in which Gringolet and the Sarthi water figured. “Why, it is Malen!” she murmured.

“You are the wise wife Howel Farf has sent to nurse the sick?”

“There is no sick to nurse.”

“Why, woman?”

“You, who come of the dark doctors of Myddfai, should not need to ask that of me.”

“I do ask it,” said Iago. “You know the man, and you have been to Dinas Moryn. I have seen, I know, neither.”

“Wait then: wait and see for yourself,” said Malen.

From what passed in this way, and her sense of hours which had passed in a sick sleep, Luned began to divine the truth,—namely, that they had long left the Towy and Llanstephan behind, and were at some unknown anchorage on the open coast. She fell into a hopeless feeling of discomfiture at the thought, and when the Captain called to them that they must take to the boat, found herself moving mechanically after Iago to the ship's side, which they descended by a rope ladder.

The physician barely replied to the Captain's “Far'well,” as he crouched down uncomfortably in the bows, his chin sunk morosely on his cloak. Luned gave herself up to a cold stupor. She forgot Rhos, her father and mother, everything. She felt nothing but the chill of the night air, that seemed the more keen in effect from the lurking smell of seaweed. The oars had a lonely sound as the boat was rowed in. She was roused by the bump of the boat on the rocks. One of the two seamen sprang out and up a steep bank of no great height. At the top, close to the brink, and defined by some faint flickering of light behind it, was a dark building, upon the door of which he rapped and kicked. Presently, he returned grumbling:

"Come, sirs, come, old missus; we can't turn the tide-top. Out ye come! Come, young master."

They scrambled out, and painfully struggled up a steep bank of rock and sandy clay to the door—closed, inhospitable—of the dark house above. The seamen carried up the trunks and the bale which formed their baggage, and began a smart battery on the iron-and-oak panels of the heavy door, against which the sea had so often beat in time of storm.

"Open, master!" cried one of the men; "open, Master Morgan. Here's a learned doctor can ease ye of your blood, and a young gentle is with him to hold the bowl, and an old wife to lay ye out afterwards. Open the door, master, and let 'em in. They're cold this warm night."

But the door remained shut.

"Ye need not knock and bellow there," said Malen; "he is not in there at all."

At the same moment came a hail from the ship.

"The tide's at the turn; come, Sandy!" it cried. "Leave them to shift as they can. We cannot lose the tide."

The sailors retreated in the boat.

"What are we to do? Where is this Morgan?" asked the physician.

"I'll show ye," said Malen, and led the way cautiously around a rocky path winding under the walls of the building.

XIII.

THE DEAD HOST.

FOLLOWING Malen and the physician, Luned felt her way in the dark as best she could along the uneven path, which hugged closely the rough walls of the sea-house, and mounted by shelving steps of rock to the ground behind it. And there a quivering gleam of light, shot up from earth, made the darkness and the loneliness of the place more apparent.

Forty or fifty paces away a lantern, its back towards them, was set on the ground. By it stood, or stooped, two men, lighted by it at such an angle that the shadow of one partly fell on the other. What it was they were doing could not in this dim lantern-twilight readily be told. But Malen led the way stealthily, with reverted hands, that warned her two companions to make no noise, and skirting a sandy knoll, brought them through the coarse sand-grass to a vantage-point which commanded the spot. Then they saw that one of the men was levering a stone aside with a spade, and the other was leaning forward over a cavity, which, by its narrow shape and size, appeared to be a grave.

Both men had a disconsolate air, as if weighed upon by the solitari-

ness of the place and the nature of their task. The first one, who had been leaning over the grave, showed on raising himself up that he had a rope in his hand.

"He does not lie easy there, Peter," he said to his companion in a dispirited voice; "the towel slipped from his face as he went down."

"Never mind that," said Peter, in a voice so deep and thick that it might have been his spade that spoke,—"never mind that. Let us cover him up. Then he won't see himself, or know clout from clay. I wish I were as fast asleep. Let us cover him up and go. God's candle! what was that?"

This ejaculation was whipped out from him by his happening to turn towards the sea-house, and so to catch sight of Malen's approaching figure. She had, on hearing Peter propose so speedy an end to their task, stolen nearer, anxious to investigate the grave ere its tenant should be earthed away out of sight. Peter's outcry called his fellow's attention also to Malen; and now both alike, seized with panic and terror of the unknown, relinquishing spade, cord, and lantern, turned and ran. Once they were beyond the range of the lantern gleam it was hard to distinguish their flight, as the ground grew more and more uneven, and merged itself in an indeterminate range of sandy hills and hollows. But ere Luned and Iago had reached the grave-side, following Malen, a sound of oars was heard from a neighboring cove; and they knew then that the men must have had a boat in waiting, and that they had taken advantage of the tide's turn to escape by it.

Luned's feelings at the deserted grave-side may not be told. The very thought of death was terrifying to her. Until now, she had never stood by an open grave, never even come into the presence of the dead. She felt the blood turn in her veins as she saw Malen lean over the narrow, black gulf and divined what lay there. But a heavy necessity was upon her to drag herself nearer, step by step, till she, too, could look down into the cavity which Malen was eagerly examining with the aid of the lantern she held in her hand.

What Luned saw there was to her sad, but not terrible. The dead man was uncoffined, and merely wrapped about in a great cloak; but the head was exposed, the white cloth that had been about it having been displaced in the lowering of the corpse. The face, white and peaked and thin, as from great privation or long illness, was that of a brown-bearded, more than middle-aged man; it was turned pallidly up to the light, and had the air of one whose eyes are kept shut with an effort in trying to sleep. She said to herself he wanted to die, and yet hardly could he come to do it. Then, recovering from the cold shiver that had seized her at his presence, she choked a sob and drew aside.

Malen turned to her: "Better go back to the house, young master,

while we fill the grave. We cannot leave it so. It will quickly be done." She added, "He must have died out here: see, here's the *lumman* he tried to call 'em over with from Abereli."

The *lumman* was a torn white pennon, tied to a long staff.

"He is not dead twenty hours," said Iago; "he called for help, but those that came, came late. Woman, you frightened them, and they were honest fools, though they fled like murderers. They run a chance of murdering themselves in the sea-dark too. But go, young sir, and we will follow. What! you are afraid?"

Luned was more afraid to stay than to go; she went back slowly to the sea-house, feeling as if she was walking all the while on the edge of an open grave. When she had found the track under the tower walls she pursued it to the sea-front and stood at the closed door, and listened to the break of the surf and whistle of the sea-birds. Every moment that cloaked form kept recalling her to her father's evil state, where he lay smitten at home: would he be laid away so before she could see him or even bid him good-by?

Though it was a May night, the light sea-fret that fell at times made it cold, and it seemed a long while ere her fellow-voyagers rejoined her. When they came, they came slowly, speaking not a word. The lantern-light showed the key of the door in a cleft in the wall. Although the chamber within looked cavernous and smelt of the sea-damp, Luned was comforted to see in its depth a glimmer of fire on the hearth. Fresh kindling of broken ship's wood and tussocks of dry sand-grass lay at hand, and with these Malen quickly made a ruddy blaze that lit up the place and gave it heart and comfort. The fire cast illusive red gleams over the disorder in which it had been left,—the cobwebbed stones of the walls, the smoked rafters, the broken and gapped floor, and the neglected kegs, pans, and platters, that lay about.

The physician meanwhile had taken up the lantern and was making exploration of a staircase approached from a door-way. This gave Malen her opportunity.

"Come hither, pretty sir," she said, with an affectation of being a stranger; "you look cold, but I'll soon have ye warmed, for I smell something like spilt wine by the hearth here. Don't ye be afraid, my little lady," she added in a lower tone; "we will spite your wicked uncle yet."

She snuffed and peered about as she spoke, and in this way came upon an overturned flagon under the broad seat of the tall spur, or settle, that defended the hearth from the door.

"Ah ha!" she said; "that reminds me of the wine-house of the Three Salmon at Aberteifi, where there was always a good smell of spilt wine on a cold night to warm your nose. There must be more where that came from. Wine of Poitou, it appears to me. And we all need

it, after two days' sea-fast, followed by a cold funeral and no wake-feast nor supper to it."

She heaped on more wood, to give her a better light to search by. With its aid she was not long ere she found a keg in a shy corner, from which she was able to fill the leather bottle ere Iago returned.

He did so with his lantern in darkness. The wind, he told them, had blown it out in a draughty doorway above.

"Na, na," said Malen, with a glance at the door below the stairway; "the gentleman is taking his last look round the rooms. The dead host, as ye know, master doctor, cannot abide a strange guest that he never asked to his house."

"The spirit is glad to be quiet, woman," said Iago. "Morgan Ola' is in the starry halls by this. But what have you here? Wine, red wine: that is good. There is a sea-chill in the house, and we all want a cup to warm our thin blood. Have you cups for all?"

"Here are four, doctor."

"Four?"

"One for each of us, one for the dead man," said Malen solemnly; "I knew him long ago, when he loved a maid and wooed a wife,—a young man; and when he dearly loved a cup of red wine."

"Hark, woman," said Iago to this, "would you unsettle this young squire's courage with your whimsies?"

But Malen filled all cups from the flagon, and handing one to each of her companions, set down the fourth on a niche within the open chimney.

"Drink, young master, drink," she said to Luned: "and you will soon feel hearty again."

The wine ran like a soft fire along Luned's veins as she tasted it, and soothed and encouraged her heart. It was as congenial as the glow of the hearth. She sat wondering at the blue flame that played elvishly about the burning ship's wood, grateful for the warmth it cast upon her chilled knees and feet. Long sighs of gradual comfort came to her lips, and with each sigh she felt it possible to shake off a little more of the sense of death-in-the-grave and of forlorn homelessness which had appeared till this moment to lie like a black shadow over the place.

Presently the physician, having relighted his lantern, announced that he would sleep in one of the chambers above, and bade them good-night.

When his steps had died into silence, Malen turned to Luned, and with much feeling and many nods and bustling gestures and old woman's inarticulate chuckles of reassurance, proceeded to tell her that she would make a bed for her here on the deep settle by the fire. "And so, honey," she went on to say, "I can talk to ye. You are not fearing the dead man in his own house, are ye? The dead are very kind to the

living, do ye know that? Oh, you need not fear the dead. They are as gentle as the does that run with the fawn. And Morgan Ola' had his hurt from Howel, the same as we have, and he will help us. And I will help ye, honey, you shall see." She knelt with this at Luned's feet and began to undo the ankle-straps and laces of her riding-shoes: "To-morrow ye must go out there and whistle up the wind shall blow ye over to Abereli, and help ye home."

"But Morgan Ola'—I am afraid when I think of him. Will he come and drink the wine?"

"I cannot tell," said Malen; "he was a shy man, was Morgan Ola'. Perhaps I had better take it out to him. He was sick this long while, and rarely went out, I have heard say, of his chamber up-stairs. In the morning we will go and see it. Last time I was at Abereli, the ale-wife told me, when the boat brought the keg across from Abereli, Morgan Ola' said, 'When this is done, I'm done too.' Ah, he knew what was coming, while he sat up in his chamber, and he said, when he saw the keg getting lower and lower, 'When that's done, I'm done too.'"

Malen went to the door, then paused, and came back.

"When that's done, I'm done too. I'm sure that's what he said." She stirred the embers on the hearth. "When that's done—I think Morgan Ola's gone down to his own,—his own folk, his other house."

"What other house?" asked Luned, anxious to humor her as far as possible, and afraid to be left alone, even by such a companion.

"There's a great city,—wide streets, shops fine as Chepe's, and many a plås and many a tavern,—under the sea. That's why they call it Dinas Moryn,—and this place has the name after it. Morgan told the old fishermen of Abereli that he had a house down there. He said he would go there; and now the wine is out—you understand,—'When that's done, I'm done too.' Morgan's gone down to his own. Better that than spend fretting days here. But I'll take the wine to his grave. Go ye to sleep now."

XIV.

DINAS MORYN.

ON the following morning Luned was awakened on her hard couch by a rosy glow which came from the open door of the sea-house. The whole sky was suffused with a gloriously stormy sunrise, and when she rose on one elbow and looked out she saw nothing but sky and sea beyond the threshold. It was as if the door directly opened into deep water, and that water the most alive imaginable, borne on a tidal current which recoiled in curled foamy crests against the wind. She rose and went to the door, and the fresh sea-wind swept in and blew upon her face. Her limbs were stiff, her eyes tired, but all sense of the sea-pains she had gone through was over. Where was Malen? She thought

she heard her within the house, and decided to climb the stair and see. As she went she felt that sudden, inordinate pang of hunger, which to young creatures seems so final. The first door she came to was bolted, and she knocked on the panels. When it opened, instead of Malen, Iago appeared, blinking his eyes at the bright light. He had not been to sleep apparently. A dying lamp lighted a small table within, upon and beneath which was a jumbled heap of books, parchments, porcelain jars, bowls, and phials. The window of the room was carefully draped.

"The tapestry at my window prolonged the night and its studies," he said, leaning against the door-post with a weary air. "It is but barely five in the morn."

"Pardon, sir, but I am hungry," said Luned, almost petulantly; "and I wish to know why I am here, in this strange house, when my uncle told me I should be at Rhos? But, I pray, let me breakfast, and go home to my father."

"Hungry? Hunger is no merit, young sir, though you speak as if it were. Hunger, like all fleshly desire, is foolish. But if you must breakfast, temper with a stale crust or a bite of salt fish your new bread (it is more wholesome to smell new bread than to eat it), and if you thirst, drink, sipping, a good draught of the nanny-goat's milk that I heard bleat below. Yes, goat's milk is best. The milk of the goat, the butter of the cow, the cheese of the mountain-ewe, these are best. And if the good creature—what is her name—Mali? shall offer you ale, or flesh meat, or salt fish with vinegar, decline them: they are, as my 'Seren Iechyd'* hath it, the three victuals of disease."

At this point Luned, finding each sentence pricked with a fresh dagger of hunger, and feeling herself unequal to the task of pressing the questions she longed to have answered till she should have eaten something, sighed so that he could not help noticing it. Thereupon, with a tone of mild resignation, he broke off, saying: "The advice of the old will not stay you, I see. Go then and breakfast;" and descending she found Malen carrying wood from without to the huge open window of the apartment, which almost formed a chamber in itself. After greeting Luned, she set about baking some flat white cakes of wheat and oat-meal, which she proceeded to prop up, in a very inconvenient way, with little pieces of stick around the fire. By this means they were quickly toasted, rather than baked, by the glowing embers.

"And there's milk," she said when these were ready; "a nanny-goat in milk came bleating to the door when I opened it. Fresh cakes are good with sweet milk to wash them down." She pointed to the

*"Star of Health," Iago's famous treatise of medicine.

broad settle within the hearth where Luned had slept: "That will do for your parlor as well as your bed."

As Luned ate she took heart. Presently she said: "Oh Malen, why was I brought here? I long to be on the road to Rhos, on my little nag. And I would the old doctor above were with me too, to heal my poor father."

"He came here to heal Morgan Ola', and Morgan is dead," said Malen.

"If the poor gentleman is dead, surely Iago will go back to Carmarthen town, and from Carmarthen to Rhos,—it is not many leagues."

"You must ask *him* that, honey. We will take him some victuals now, and there will be your chance. Does he know you for a maid? —No?"

Luned shook her head. "He hates all maids, all women, young and old."

"He may hate me, but he must put up with me if he wants bread to send down his wizened throat," said Malen, "for here he must stay till your uncle, my Lord Black, lets him go free again."

"My uncle said he would help heal my father."

"Your uncle says what suits him. He would gladly see your father where Morgan Ola' lies, under the sod. But come, let us go to the old doctor."

When they reached his door, with a platter of cakes and a cup of wine, they found it shut.

"Bread may go in where swords break on the latch," said Malen, and boldly opened.

Iago was standing, a piece of charcoal in hand, by a white lime-washed wall, which was inscribed with curves, and lines, and archaic signs. An uneasy odor, as of burnt amber, and some volatile unascertained drug, filled the room. Malen proffered the bread and cup she carried.

"Warm bread," he said, smelling it. "'Tis unfit to eat for a day. I need no food, woman, but you may leave the cup."

He waved her away. She put down cup and platter and left them. Luned paused, for he said, "I will talk to you, Perrot."

He seemed about to speak to her, but instead he broke off a piece of the cake, swallowing it eagerly. Other pieces were as quickly disposed of. The bread disappeared as if by magic. The turn of the cup came to like effect: its contents went at a draught. For one moment he looked round him then, as if for more; but nature having so far asserted itself, he as quickly forgot it and its needs. He was already growing abstracted again.

"Sir," said Luned, "I would leave you to your studies, but first tell me, of your courtesy, when I may return to my home at Rhos? My

father lies sick with a sore wound, and my uncle Howel said you would send some potion, or yourself go, to heal him."

"Your uncle spoke only of the sick man here," Iago murmured slowly, picking at his piece of charcoal as if in perplexity, but returning to the wall.

"Ah, sir, I know you are wise in herbs and stars, and if you are so learned a physician you can heal him: surely, surely you can heal him?"

"I can do what I may when the time is come," he said; but his voice to her ear was full of abstraction.

"I fear," he continued, as if he directed his mind with difficulty to her needs,—"I fear it may not be yet." But as he spoke, he turned his head, and then it seemed that her eyes, brimming with a bright eagerness that might end in tears, really struck him for the first time. The appeal expressed in their beseeching looks might have moved one less sensitive than he to pity. His eye kindled, and his voice, when he spoke again, quickened, till it sounded like an attenuated echo of her own eagerness.

"Oh, young sir," he said, "hearken to me, and you shall be more content to sit in this gray wall than to roam all the world without."

"I do not ask to roam," she said sadly; "I only wish to go home and save my father."

"Home is as much here as there, believe me," said the old man, his pale-blue eyes scanning her earnestly, while she shook her head, looking wistfully towards the window. "But indeed," he continued, "like you, I came here not of my own will, but at the constraint of your masterful kinsman. And yet he, too, is but the creature of the stars, who write in men their purpose, and draw with their starry strings one here, another there. We are their servants, and can but study to know their will, their occultation and decline, their splendid waking and austerer sleep."

He paused. She moved nearer him with a gesture of suspense.

"Know," he resumed, "you are free as I am of this place. As you saw, he whom I came to heal was already dead. But for our leaving this place, the sea's toils that were set for Morgan Ola' are set for us by your uncle. But come, see Morgan Ola's chamber, which lies above this. He left a letter addressed to Roger of Rhos; that is your father; though why the son of Roger of Rhos should be called Perrot—

Luned felt uneasy, fearing he was about to ask her awkward questions, but instead, taking a rush-light, he led the way out of his chamber, up one turn after another of passage and stairway, to a much loftier room than that they had left.

It had but one eyelet window, and this was stuffed with straw, but the taper's glimpse showed it to be furnished for extraordinary purposes. It contained a finely carved coffer, decorated with the painted

signs of the Zodiac. Along the wall stood an array of vessels of white and black ware and a crucible. On the wall was rudely painted an emblem of a cross set in a circle,—a rose at the juncture.

"Ha!" said Iago, "here I am."

His tone was one of extraordinary gratification. He paused, absorbed in contemplation before the emblem on the wall; and remembering his companion impatiently waved her away. She stood for a moment in indecision, and then, feeling utterly discomfited, and hopeless of aid from him, went slowly down the stair and sought comfort from Malen again.

"Are we far—very far—from Rhos?" she asked her.

"You will soon see," said Malen, "if you go past Morgan Ola's grave to the rocks beyond. You will see the houses of Abereli then, plain as you see oak-trees from Rhos."

"How far is Abereli from Rhos then?"

"Only a long day's ride, or more."

"Then I can walk in three days." Her heart leaped at the idea of it, and she set out to explore a possible way home.

Before the sea-house, with a tide half in, a range of black rocks was visible now in the haven where the boat had landed them last night. On the left, where the land receded sharply, a scanty track led off along shallow cliffs, full of such narrow creeks as a boat might use. She saw one, wider than the rest, which ran into a small bay under the lee of a sandy knoll. The top of this would give her a good view, and the track to it was vagarious enough to avoid the grave, near which she was afraid to pass. On reaching the bay, she discovered that what had looked like a round knoll at a short distance now proved to be the sandy end of a long ridge of higher ground. Hastening on, she scrambled up it, to emerge breathless in the long, wiry grass and tufts of sea-mugwort on the top. She stood there, panting, one hand on her side while her eyes moved hurriedly all around her. Then she sank down aghast. On all sides, and at no great range, stretched in the unclouded morning sun the blue, white-crested sea, which formed a channel two or three miles wide between the mainland and Dinas Moryn. It had never entered her thought till now that Dinas Moryn could be, what it was, an island.

She had no heart to explore farther. For some time she remained sitting there, confronting her predicament; then she returned dispiritedly to the sea-house. Stealing in unobserved and up-stairs, she found her way into a small chamber whose door stood open. It was the third of three small rooms at the very top of the tower. There she threw herself on the pallet of a narrow bed and gave herself up to despair.

XV.

THE CRIMSON ROBE.

BEFORE she had sobbed tears enough to make the pillow at her head any damper than it was already from the sea-air she had fallen asleep. She dreamt she was at Rhos, and had wandered out into the wood below the house looking for Gringolet. Suddenly she saw his bright eyes looking at her through the trees, and he came to her, the sun shining on the glossy curve of his neck. But when she put out her hand to his mane it was to find it cold, quite unlike its usual silken warmth. She awoke with that, and saw it was not Gringolet at all, but the damp velvet coverlet of the bed, upon which her hand had been resting as she slept.

The unpleasantness of the sensation roused her, and she lay, staring about her, wondering at the strange shapes she saw. The walls of the room were covered with crude frescoes of trees, painted with straight brown trunks and long green branches. This, then, must be Morgan Ola's chamber. It led her on to a waking dream of the man who had attempted a forest illusion in these bleak sea-surroundings, who was now laid in his grave amid the sand and stones with no green branch ever to wave over him. How was it he was content to accept his fate and stay here? Ah, so would not she be. She would fight, and suffer death, rather than live in such an exile. She jumped up from the bed at the thought of it, and her eye fell on a deep chest of oak in a corner of the room. She tried the lid, which one had to lift off; and then it appeared that a rich, living, rosy light overflowed from it. She uttered a cry of delight as she drew out a radiant silken robe of a soft flame-color. It was embroidered with a fine silken netting of silver thread. She held it up, laughed a little even from the over-pleasure of seeing it. Finally she decided to try it on. She was absorbed in the process, admiring the folds as they fell about her, when there was a creak at the door, and ere she could look for a hiding-place in came Malen.

Malen could not restrain her wonder and delight. "In such a gown as that," she said, "ye can make the ould doctor do what ye will. That gown is the boat shall float you over to Abereli, and carry ye home, and cure your dad. You have tried Doctor Iago as a lad, now try him as a maid."

"He hates all maids."

"How do you know that?"

"My uncle said—"

"Your uncle? Ach,—you do not believe what Howel Farf says? But wait, what is that? It is the ould doctor calling me."

There came, in fact, a loud summons from the physician's door. Luned was not sorry to be left alone, so as to look at herself, and realize

her own possible effect upon Iago. Would it be as Malen said? Malen went, and she heard him despatch her on some errand below. "Leave it at the door," he called after her in a tremulous and urgent voice.

In a few moments she heard Malen returning. The old woman had climbed the stairs so fast that she was out of breath, and coming to Luned's chamber, begged her to take what she carried to his door, and knock, and leave it there. It was a long glass phial that Malen had taken down to wash for him. "He is in a huntsman's hurry for it," she said.

Drawing her crimson robe about her, with a delightful sensation of recovered maidenhood and womanly possibilities, she ascended the stairs as quickly as she could and stole to Iago's door. Though it was closed, an aromatic fragrance, as of some vaporous distillation, reached her. She knocked without response, put down the phial, went away, and then, finding the phial had not been taken, was impelled to return again to listen. All was quiet within. The narrow passage without the door was dark at all times, having no window to light it. Waiting there in some uneasiness, she knocked again. There was no reply for some minutes. She summoned up all courage, and knocked a third time, more loudly. Iago's voice then sounded, and she thought he said, "Bring it hither."

She lifted the latch. The chamber, which had a mere eyelet of a window, and that heavily draped from the day, was dark. A small silver lamp, with a green flame, gave the only light. The lamp burned beneath a crucible, whose curved beak was bent over a tiny crystal vase, with a narrow neck, into which was being distilled, drop by drop, a pale-green, viscous fluid. The master knelt, his head bent sideways to watch the process, in which he seemed wholly absorbed.

Occasionally he uttered a word. He was counting the drops:

"Seven!—eight!—nine!"

He clasped his hands. "Nine, ah kind stars! Nine drops!"

He removed the crucible. The little green flame spired high into the air, like some wondrous green plant,—a stalk and a sole curved leaf, and within the fold of the leaf a suggested pale blossom. He rose to his feet, lifted, with a long hand with infinite care, the tiny crystal vase, and was about to hold it up against the light when Luned's gown, as she shifted her posture, rustled.

He turned his head, and, seeing her, uttered a cry and let the vase fall. It was shattered into a thousand pieces. At the same moment the flame of the lamp sank down and lightly expired, and the room was in darkness.

Luned, filled with a terror of untold, unknown things, turned, trembling and shaken, and fled from the room.

XVI.

STRANGE NEWS.

AFTER this catastrophe Luned hastily disrobed herself of the crimson gown and put it away, and shrank from meeting Iago at all. Two days passed, during which gray rain-storms swept rampant over the island. Her only distractions were talking to Malen and going up (in much fear lest Iago should see her) to the one opening in the tower, which she had found afforded a glimpse of the opposite mainland when it was not blotted out by the sheets of rain.

From this watch-out she was able to catch a glimpse of Morgan Ola's grave, and her own predicament, imprisoned here (as he had been), gave her a new feeling for the dead man who lay there, his grave unprotected from the salt blasts. Next day, on feeling in the pocket of the gray tunic, she found imbedded in the lining the birch-pod she had put there when she had sat with Perrot by the graveyard, and she decided to go to his grave and scatter the birch-seed upon it.

The morning, happily, was fine. The air was magically clear as Luned stole out and round the tower to the grave. There she was making holes with a stick in the sandy earth when a step approaching made her turn. It was Iago.

"If you will come to my chamber," he said, without any preamble, nervously plucking at the pins in his gown, "perhaps I can give you some news." With that he turned and went abruptly to the sea-house.

What did he mean? Luned looked after him in wonder. Presently, when the last seed was put in, she turned too in his traces, and went up the stairs to his chamber. When she entered he made a profound bow and showed a little repast of bread and a cup of milk spread on the table.

"Presently," he began, "you shall eat and drink, but first I have much to show you." He went to a chest thereupon, and began to unwrap a gleaming silver ewer from a black cloth. "Here," said he, "is a bowl, that filled with well-water shall show you things that are passing far from here, whether it be at Rome itself, or in your own home. And here," said he further, "is a phial which contains three drops of a crystal fluid, each one of which is the fee of a life. When I have made the three, thirty,—the phial fell as I was filling it, and only three were left,—your father, if he still need it, shall try their virtue, which is vital." He replaced the precious phial, and turning again to the bowl, swathed it in the folds of a black cloth. Next he filled it brimful of clear water, placing it on a low table, so that she could kneel and look into it without discomfort. This done, he lit the bronze spirit-lamp she had seen before, and draped the window slit with a black curtain, so that no daylight could enter.

"I have seen so starry a creature in this chamber, in a flame-hued garment, but two days gone," said he, "that I know this place to be thrice fortunate for me. And if it be, as I believe, that vast commotion is shaking all the secular world, that its kings have fallen, and its men who were high lie low, well for you, Perrot, that you are here, and not amid the fields of Rhos. Kneel now and say what you see within the water!"

She knelt as he directed her, placing two hands about the bowl. At first her thoughts wandered, and she was tempted to look up and to question Iago's face; but the first glance warned her to desist. Soon Rhos and its people, her mother and her father, filled all her mind.

"Tell me," said he again,—"tell me what you see."

"I see," said she abstractedly, as she gazed into the crystal, "the hall at Rhos. The maids move to and fro silently. The hall is almost dark. A woman is leaning at the hearth. She is watching a pot on the embers. Now a flame spurts up, and she turns her face; it is my mother. She is tired. Her chin rests on her hand. Her face is very white—"

"Nay, go on," said Iago, sternly enough.

"Now," said Luned, "now the hall is grown dim, as if a smoke were blown out of the fire. My mother turns, as 'twere to hear a sound at the door. I hear it, like someone knocking, knocking. She rises and goes to the door. The door partly opens. A shadow, like a swirl of thick smoke, is there. No; it is a woman in black robes. She tries to enter. My mother strives with her and would push her away. She strives harder; but in vain. She is driven away, and the door is shut again."

"Have you seen the woman before?"

"Oh, no, she is a foreign woman. Her robes are not such as we wear; but I could not see her face—"

"Go on," said Iago.

"I see the gate before a castle. Three horsemen in mail ride out. The foremost two I do not know. They wear Norman helms. The third is Howel. A meadow lies below, with a sunlit stream, level with the grass, brightly coursing through it. They ride fast across the green. A multitude of men and horse follow. But now another multitude seems to arise and come against them. They meet with a whirling of swords and spears. Ha! now,—now,—the river runs red with blood, and the place fades from me in a blurred shadow. I am afraid."

"Go on, go on!" cried Iago.

"I can no more," she sobbed; "I am afraid to look at what comes. One face fills the crystal, and it has a laughing mouth, and blanched cheeks, and a black beard,—and it has that which tells me of death in it."

"But wait," said Iago, with some show of disappointment, taking away the strip of parchment; "you have not seen what I intended. Wait now awhile."

"Oh, no! for I am held fast; it is as if some hands hold my head down to the mirror. I see a narrow chamber, and there, upon a narrow pallet, lies a sick man. Oh, I am sad," she said,—"sad and heart-broken to see him. His head is swathed in black bandages, his face is wasted and gray with pain, his strong hand lies weak on the green coverlet, like a dead leaf on the grass." Here she suddenly broke off, and lifting her eyes from the water, looked distractedly about the room, crying out,—"Father, father!—it is my father. I heard him call me. Oh, sir," she went on, rising, "I must go to him,—go at once to Rhos."

Iago started uneasily, and going to the window drew aside the curtain, as she saw, with hands that trembled. "Now," he said, "look again,—once again."

She did give one more look, and its effect was certainly not what Iago intended.

XVII.

THE CORACLE.

THAT last glance showed her in the bowl the creek before the sea-house, and a coracle rounding the leeward horn dropping a brown sail no bigger than a man's cloak. She scanned it, with a fever in her eyes, as she thought of her own chance of escape; but, in fact, it seemed barely large enough for the man and boy it carried. The man was lowering the sail; the boy sat still, his head down, as if afraid of disturbing the balance of the lightly dressed craft. But Luned freighted with all her cares and fears that frail shell of canvas and wicker-work, as it floated in, light as a feather. When it had nearly reached land her excitement was too much for her. She sprang up, crying to Iago,—"A boat, a coracle!" darted off and down-stairs. She rushed past Malen below without a word.

In truth, there was a coracle, and just on the point of landing, as she saw on reaching the door. It contained man and boy, too, just as she had seen. When it touched the bank of brown sea-weed below the rocks, the man, a fisherman by his blue smock, stepped out, and the boy handed him a small packet. With this in one hand he made his way up to the house. The tide was still rising, and the boy remained by the coracle, ready to pull it up higher as the water rose. He stood there, his back turned to them; and something in his bearing touched Luned's curiosity, which was further quickened by her hearing the fisherman say he bore a letter for the physician.

"A letter just dying to be read," he described it to Malen, who led

him to the house, while Luned stole down to the boy. He still stood with his back to the shore, holding the coracle. He was quite a youngster,—not more than eleven or twelve years old,—and the clumsy garb he wore—a blue fisherman's smock and a sea-cap with flaps, both much too big for him—gave him a dwarfish air.

"Where are you from?—Abereli?" she asked in an excited whisper, when she was within a pace of his ear.

Then he turned his head slightly, and the face it disclosed was so different to what she had expected that she started back. For the sly look askance that he gave changed the day at a stroke.

It was Perrot, none other. He put a finger to his lips, as she was about to ask twenty questions of him.

"Sweet maid, your father is very sick; you must come at once. I bribed Peter to bring me over; it was the only boat, and it will only hold two. What shall we do? Where is the old fellow?" He meant Iago.

Luned paled and trembled as she pointed to the house, within whose door Malen and the boatman had disappeared. "I must go and see him," she said.

Perrot shook his head. "What if he won't let you go?"

But she was already flying up the steep bank before the door. When she found Iago, Peter was with him up-stairs, and he was at a window, reading the despatch Peter had brought. The letter was brief, but to the purpose. It was from the parson of Capel Verdre, begging that the Maid of Rhos should be permitted to return because her father lay a-dying.

"Where did you have this?" he asked Peter.

"A little squire,—he might be the King of England's son, so sweet-mouthed is he. And he wears a dagger fit to open cockles or prick a buck's throat—either one or the other. And he rode a mountain pony so fast it burst its skin atop of Abereli bank. And little master—" It was evident Peter would extend his account of Perrot by all manner of flourishes in this vein if he were permitted.

Iago cut him short. "Where is this prodigy?"

Peter pointed to the beach.

"Well, he shall carry a letter back to Rhos," Iago remarked to Luned, "to say you will leave here in three days."

"But, oh," she cried, "it is little Perrot himself—is the messenger. I have spoken to him, and my father, he says, lies a-dying. Kind sire, I must go now—go at once."

Iago was shaken by her urgency. "How many will your coracle carry?" he asked Peter.

"Indeed, your holy worship, 'tis only fit for one. With two in it, it is like a cracked pot in a pail of water."

"There," said Iago, "what can we do? H'm, h'm. And the boy had only one pony?"

"And that one is broke his wind."

"But horses are to be had at Abereli?"

"Never a one, save Sioni's mare, and she is a score and a half of winters old. But," he added, "money will breed a couple, I reckon, by the day after to-morrow or the mid of the week if you need them."

It seemed everything was against her reaching Rhos.

What could she do? While she was hesitating, Iago, turning to her, spoke of the letter Morgan Ola' had left addressed to her father. "That at any rate," he said, "ought to go." It was in a drawer of his table in the room he had used as his laboratory, and where he had shown her the phial. He begged her to get it, while he also indited a letter in reply to that Peter had brought. Hastening to the upper chamber, Luned opened a drawer at a venture; it was that containing Iago's phial with the three remaining drops of his elixir. At sight of it, some spirit within her prompted her to take it. She did so, secreting it within an inner pocket of her tunic with a flutter of conscience. She turned then to the other drawer, and found Morgan Ola's letter, a long sealed packet of stained parchment, tied about by a yellow thread.

When she rejoined Iago, he was writing painfully his epistle to the parson of Capel Verdre. He did not like to be interrupted. "Yes, yes!" he said impatiently; "Peter shall bring it after you to the boat,—if you go on with the other," he cried; "the tide is at the turn and Peter says he cannot wait."

She flew down the stair. Peter was hurriedly regaling there on a cup of wine and a platter of victuals. Malen led Luned out to the rocky platform before the door, asking her, "What is it, honey?"

Luned told her with tears. Malen fell a-muttering, and glanced suspiciously back at Peter. "Go you to the coracle," she said; "there are more doctors than Iago, and more boatmen than Peter." What did she mean?

"Oh Perrot!" cried Luned, on reaching the coracle,—"oh Perrot! there is no boat for me, and there are no horses for us at Abereli, and I shall be too late!"

"You shall go instead of me," said Perrot.

"No," interposed Malen, "you must go to show her the way. Cannot you paddle, young master? Can't you manage a coracle?" But Perrot nodded a desperate "No!" and with that Malen eased the coracle from the bed of sea-weed, which marked the high-water mark, and motioned Luned to step into it. She bundled Perrot in. "And now," she said,—walking into the water, pushing it off, and then getting in lightly herself,—"the three of us are not so heavy as Peter.

The current outside and the wind will do the rest. There won't be such another sweet south breeze again these twenty days."

Before Luned had quite realized it, they were being carried out to the opening of the creek before the house. The coracle spun like a top. Every swirl of the current made it dance again, and the one-bladed paddle in Malen's hand seemed a thing bewitched. They were in difficulties among the rocks outside notwithstanding, when by good hap, Malen having sported the small sail, the wind, though it was as gentle as breathing, swept them clear. The last glimpse they had of the island at close quarters was of Peter, running, red and explosive, along the sandy bank of the western horn of the creek, and calling out to them to put about. But in vain he twisted his mouth and made his brown hand into a speaking-trumpet. They could not have put about if they would.

Meanwhile, the wind drove the coracle at a scudding pace against the eastern shore of the headland beyond Abereli. They ran aground before they dropped sail, and the paddle did not save them from a sand-bank where they ran aground. There they struggled vainly, and had finally to jump into shallow water and wade ashore, dragging the coracle after them. There they safely beached and left it, Malen turning it upside down, as the custom was. She hurried them over the rocks, and made light of the roughness of the way. But when they had crossed a last sea-gully and stepped upon the yellow half-moon of sand at the other end of which stood the white houses of Abereli, she said exultantly, "Faith, Rhosser is saved,—if we can get horses there!"

At a mean mud-walled hostelry, standing on the edge of the sands, Perrot had left his poor pony. This house had a primitive sign-post made of an old ship's mast stuck out from the gable. As they approached, Luned saw it was adorned with the last tattered twigs of a wine-bush and a weather-beaten sheaf of barley straw, which were tied to the end of it.

Drawing nearer, Perrot snapped his fingers as he pointed out four or five great horses, carelessly tethered so that they were kicking and biting each other, under the landward gable of the house. From within came a sound of roystering, which gradually resolved itself into this profane stanza:

"Down went Ned,—old King Ned,
And up came Mortimer instead.
'And what will I do then?' said King Ned.
'What will you do?' said Queen Meg,—
'You go beg!'
'Ay, go a-begging,' Mortimer said.

(*Chorus.*)

"So down goes Ned, old King Ned,
And up comes Mortimer instead."

"Soldiers," said Malen. "Were they here when you left with Peter, young master?"

Perrot shook his head, and Malen pointed the way to a neighboring hut. "Peter's house," she added. "These men mustn't see us." She darted off like a hare through the soft sand, and they both turned to follow her, when by bad luck there was an increased commotion among the horses under the hostelry. This brought one of the men to the door, still carolling,—

"Down goes Ned,—Ned, King Ned,"

a strain which stopped when he saw them.

"Here, my pretty young squires—here, youngsters!" he called out. He took Malen probably for some native old body of the place.

"Take no notice," said Perrot, hurrying on; "the beast is wine-flushed."

But the man was not to be gainsaid. He called out again, threatening to send a bolt after them if they did not halt.

"There are more inside. Come," said Perrot to Luned, stopping short; "we will gammon him with a silver-bit or so."

"Down goes Ned,"

sang the man again, separating the tangled reins of the horses as they approached:

"Down goes Ned,
Up comes Mortimer instead."

Who are you for—Meg or Ned? Come inside, and drink the health of my lord and master, Mortimer, and sing us a song. You can sing now, I can tell that," he said, turning more particularly to Luned; "you have as singing a mouth as ever I set eyes on."

Luned, in terror of the man, shook her head.

"What! not sing? what then?"

"He can whistle as like a bird," said Perrot, coming to the rescue,— "as like an ousel on a May morning, as your nose is like the King's trumpeter, all dressed in red."

"My nose!—ha, ha!" laughed the man. "Come in, young gentlemen, for I see you are no common pups of this village. You shall drink to the health of Queen Meg,—in good wine, not beer,—and whistle and sing; ay, you shall that."

The turbulence of the scene, the brutal noise and effects of wine within, frightened Luned, and she turned white as milk. But Perrot, seeing his chance, made a valiant grimace at her, and nodded assurances to put her in better countenance. She made an effort, then, to recover her nerve, and she drank a draught out of the huge pewter cup when it

was put into her hands; she even tried to copy Perrot in assuming a roysterer's airs, which he did with an absurd, little-boy's mixture of delighted impudence, naughtiness, and innocence.

"Here's one can whistle like a flute for sweetness," said their first acquaintance. "Make way for a young gentleman. He shall stand on the table,—Holy Blue, so he shall,—and we'll shut our eyes and fancy we're listening to the brown bird of St. Ouen."

On the table were a leather bottle, a pewter platter of broken meat, another of bread, and (when it was not circulating) the pewter mug, that held half a gallon.

"Look out," cried one of the men, and with that cleared the board by the simple method of lifting one end of it, so that the dishes and cups and their contents slid rattling to the sandy floor. "Now," he cried to Luned, "up with you, my blackbird!"

There was nothing for it save to mount as she was bid. But when she had mounted there, something of unusual youthful grace in her presence struck even these roysterers. And when she began to whistle, and the soft piping began, like a thrush in his most rapturous notes, the place grew silent as a birch-grove on a May morning. The good-man stole to the inner door; the good-wife peeped round his arm. Not one of the five, well fumed with wine as they were, so much as stirred a hand. The close den might have been a green thicket. It seemed its oak rafters remembered their woodland days, and put forth buds and branches sprayed with green that stirred to the whistle.

When she had finished she would have jumped down, but Perrot made a sign to her to go on, and conveyed by a hardly perceptible nod that he wished to slip out. What sudden whim was in his head?

She fell back then upon the plaintive melody the harper had harped at the abbot's feast, and whistled it so tenderly that the men's eyes shut in ecstasy, but they did not know what it recalled to her:

" . . . the white sea-isle,
Where Merlin's harp is heard a little while,—
A little while."

But the piping was untimely ended by a noise of shouts, barking curs, and stamping horses without. The men, with a volley of curses at the interruption, got up and ran to the door. There was matter for fresh imprecations to be found there. However it had come about, three of the five horses were loose from their tether and galloping wildly across the sands, chased by a couple of barking curs. The other two had disappeared.

Luned did not divine that the author of this mischief was Malen, until she was seized by Perrot in the door-way and dragged out through the back of the hostelry to the stable.

The place was a foul shed, full of brown shadow and browner malodors. A rough Welsh pony was lying panting on the ground. But Perrot dragged her on to a sandy yard, and, half laughing, half choking with his tremors, showed her where Malen stood holding the other two horses. Malen helped her to mount one, and Perrot clambered on to the other.

"Go!" cried the old woman. "I may be at Rhos before either of ye."

Behind the house clustered a string of dirty hovels about the banks of a small stream which made a hollow. In a moment Perrot had urged his horse through the water, and, crossing the rough dyke that bounded a common on the left, took to the turf. There, making the most of what thorns, furze bushes, and other covert they could find, they struck away boldly at a hand-gallop.

They rode furiously the first mile, hardly daring to speak, and afraid of every shout behind them. No pursuit declared itself, however, and when they had passed a ruined tower, and found another small dingle and stream, they took courage and paused to recover themselves and reconnoitre.

"Oh, you and Malen did that very well," said Luned, with all a girl's admiration of a boy's escapade.

"We have got their two best horses," said Perrot, "and a good start; but we must lose no time in beating about."

"Besides," she added with a shiver, "we might meet others, and worse ones. What were they doing at Abereli?"

"Mischief,—black mischief. You don't know what things have come about since that night at Rhos. You heard what the soldiers sang,—'Down goes Ned'? The King is down. The De Spencers are down, and your uncle,—but hark!" A horn was blown, away on their right,—towards the sea-shore,—as he spoke.

"Come," said Perrot, "we must take the hill." And he dug his heels into the flanks of his huge horse.

At the top of the hill stood a small round tower, white-washed, and so posted against the sky-line as to catch the sun.

Perrot was suspicious of this tower. "Some one on the lookout," he muttered, "must be in it;" but there was no turning back. "The Perrots are powerful in this commot," he said,—"indeed, in all this country. We had better say we come from Arberth and bear despatches to Rhos and Castle Caerdydd."

Agreed in this, they urged on their horses to the tower. All that they found there were two herds and a sheep-cur. The younger of the two (both were unkempt and only half clad) instead of a stick or crutch held a spear, a beautiful weapon of embossed steel, in his hand.

"Ha!" cried Perrot in Welsh, as they rode up, assuming an air of pert authority, "where got you that pretty thing?"

For reply, the young herdsman, who was tall and sinewy, raised it and hurled it with great force at Perrot's head. He ducked, seeing it coming, and it missed him; but it grazed Luned's horse on the hind-quarters, raising the hair, and so frightening the beast that it started and set off at a wild gallop. Perrot very wisely attempted no revenge, but rode after her. In this way they thundered down upon a small grange and mill, situate at a wood-side, with water dammed into a murky mill-pond from a scanty stream. Into this pond Luned's horse, though slackening its gallop, would have carried her, but at the capping moment a girl whose hair and gown were dusted with meal ran out of the mill-house and very deftly caught the beast by the bridle. This accomplished, she drew back within the doorway as if shame-faced at her own courage. Luned was still too frightened to accost the girl, but Perrot asked her which was the best way to Arberth.

"My father's within," said the maid, looking at them with mixed curiosity and uneasiness; "I'll ask him."

"No, don't," cried Perrot, and beckoned to her to come out to them.

She came out unwillingly. "They're fighting over there," she said—she pointed to the northeast—"and there lies the road to Arberth."

"Who are fighting?" asked Perrot.

"Some of Mortimer's men; they were hunting him they call Howel Farf; but he has turned on them. Don't you young squires belong to one of them?"

Perrot shook his head: "We bear despatches for Sir John Perrot," he said.

"I should be afraid," she said simply; "they are both burning the country up yonder as they go,—corn stacks, coverts, and granges. But dad has heard the Lord of Kemes is coming and a thousand knights and men with him. Oh, I should be afraid. And Howel Farf,—he was coming here to fire the place if the others had not set watch. They say he has a long black beard, and every hair he pulls out of it strangles a maid. There was the Maid of Rhos—she was kin to him. He carried her away. Oh, 'tis too awful to tell."

Luned gazed open-mouthed, turning pale at the girl's account of her own reputed awful overtaking at Howel's hands.

"What do they say?" asked Perrot of the girl.

"Oh, I can't tell you,—everything!" she said with a gesture that hinted at some unspeakable stroke of death,—or worse.

Another voice broke this strange colloquy. It was the miller in person, who appeared at the sack-door in the second floor of the mill. His voice was husky with flour or fright.

"Hi!" he cried, "you'd better be on your way. I hear horses

coming now,—a score or more,—the road you came by. Howel Farf himself, I shouldn't wonder. Better be off."

They waited to hear no more, but in a trice were urging their horses up the narrow dingle above the mill, acting on a wave of the girl's hand in that direction. Three black pigs were the only further adventure till they emerged on a long reach of melancholy moorland, extending for miles without a tree.

"Can this be Carew moor?" said Luned.

"No. But do you see that brown smoke in the north, and some castle to the right of it. There must be a barn burning. We had better keep away from that."

XVIII.

THE DEATH'S HEAD.

WHEN they had left the moor, they crossed a quiet meadow and a succession of hazel copses glistening with the sun and alive with birds.

In the midst of one copse, beside a brown pool of water, they reined up, for their horses were much spent by the long ride.

"We ought to wash their mouths with water," said Perrot, sliding off his, "and let them drink,—just a dribble or so."

Luned also dismounted.

"Oh Perrot," she said, as she did so,—thinking always of Rhos and the dangers of the road there,—"I cannot bear to think of people dying on such a day. Do you think we shall save *him*?"

"Yes, if we can dodge Uncle Farf," said Perrot; "some will die before night if he has a Red-hand left."

"Don't speak his name," she said; "I cannot bear to think of him in such a green place."

"Oh, ho!" cried a bold voice close on their right; "you don't like to think of Howel Farf?"

They turned in terror.

An enormous head and shoulders protruded themselves from a hazel brake close by Perrot. Luned recognized at once in the intruder Cadno, Howel's lieutenant.

She could not refrain from a slight scream, while Perrot, without a word, made a cat's scramble for his horse's pad. It was of no use. Cadno had the arm of a gorilla. It shot out of the brake, and seized the reins of Perrot's horse, pulling it round so that he fell to the ground on one knee. But he did not lose his presence of mind, and called out, even in Cadno's clutches, to Luned to mount and ride off.

She did not hesitate then, but luckily caught the beak, so to call it, of her horse's pad, and was up on the huge beast in a trice. A simultaneous yell from a dozen throats of the men Cadno had held in ambush for other travellers than these two was so far an aid to her that

it frightened her horse for the second time. He went off, charging a hazel-tree at a lumbering canter, with a loose rein, while half a dozen bolts rattled in the leaves about her.

He carried her safe into a quiet pasture. Less than a mile farther of level fields brought them to a stiff bank, and he pulled up sulkily at its foot and fell into a walking stride. She was disconcerted at the pause, but when she glanced back there was no sign of pursuit. Her danger, if she had known it, really lay not behind, but before. At the head of the ascent stood a strong-posted grange with high walls around. Screened by trees, it looked sleepy and innocent to her eye as she rode up; but she was deceived. Near the gateway sat atop of the wall a long-legged man, his legs dangling to and fro. Well armed, cross-bow in hand, he had a careless, formidable air that was very much that of the man in possession.

“Ha, monsieur!” he called out to her gayly, “where are you for?—Raglan or Dieppe? *Hé?*”

She tried to urge on her horse, but he stopped dead. Meanwhile the man playfully raised his cross-bow and spoke to someone within the yard of the grange. Very quickly the gates opened, and two men-at-arms of a more serious air than that of the man on the wall stepped briskly out, seized her horse, and led him in. Half a score of other men were standing by horses in the yard. She saw at once they were Norman men-at-arms, and knew she was trapped.

She was taken before a casual tribunal of three in the hall of the grange,—a petty captain and two masters-at-arms. The petty captain had a heavy face and a dull, slow voice, but he was intelligent.

“You have a letter, monsieur,—for whom?”

She was compelled to produce the letter from Morgan Ola’ to her father. He examined it and broke the seal, but as it was written in Welsh he could make nothing of it.

“Humph!” he said, handing it back to her, to her great relief; “looks like one of Howel of the Pant’s tricks. My Lord of Kemes shall receive it from your own hands. And now,” he added, looking at her keenly, “you have something there in your pouch. Come!”

In fact, she was so anxious about Iago’s little phial containing the three precious drops, that her hand kept involuntarily travelling towards the pocket that held it.

“Come!” said the Captain a second time, more urgently.

She had much ado to keep a brave face. A blush, she felt, would be fatal. She thought it wise to produce the phial and explain it was medicine for a sick man, her father.

The Captain examined the phial.

“Three drops,” he said; “there’s some devil’s trick in that. People send poison, not medicine, in three drops.”

He tried to uncork it, but the slender stopper evaded his big fingers. One of his comrades suggested his committing the bottle to the fire in the kitchen. But he shook his head, and thereupon, growing impatient, laid the phial on the edge of the oak table, and drawing his *couteau à croix*, with one blow cracked it.

Luned could not refrain from crying out, as if the blow hurt her physically. Fortunately, the Captain in questioning her further asked her if she had passed any *gamins gallois* on the way. This brought out the fact of her having fled before Howel Farf's men, who were in ambush and who had detained her companion.

"And who was your companion?" asked the Captain.

"Perrot," she said, to the astonishment of the three men; for they were themselves nominally under the command of Sir James Perrot.

In the end they announced that she must go with them to Arberth so soon as another small detachment they were waiting for should arrive. It was clear that they held Howel Farf in too much respect to risk lightly a collision with him.

"But wait till my Lord of Kemes comes," said the Captain, as he rose to see the lodging of his prisoner in a parlor of the grange under surveillance; "he will find a French barber for Monsieur Berbe-noir."

The ennui of delay, the thought of the broken phial and of Perrot's ill-luck, and the gloom of the dark, mouldy parlor in which she was placed, were together rapidly threatening to make Luned's mood a hopeless one when she heard a hubbub without, and her door was opened. It was the Captain, who escorted her to the hall again. There small ale, with barley bread and cheese, were being doled out to the men, and she was wise enough to control her feelings and eat. She gathered that the party had received orders to march. Where were they bound?

The party rode out from the grange, and took a road leading towards the hills in the north. They travelled for a few miles at no great pace as the sun sank over the May meadows, and a cold, keen wind sprang up in the northeast. With the cold wind a smear of gray mist was drawn across the evening sky, and the night fell rapidly. A ruddy glare, seen very ominously red and bright under this lowering sky, showed itself ahead of them.

"That's one of Howel Farf's candles," Luned heard one of the men in front of her say.

The glare died away as suddenly as it had appeared. But soon afterwards the wind, as they emerged from a screen of dark trees, brought a distinct rumor of men's voices, yelling and hurrahing and hooting.

"That should be at Arberth," said the same man who had spoken before. He had barely said it ere he turned in his saddle and made as if he would scrutinize Luned's features. "Confound this bat's

vespers!" he said; "I thought I saw this young squire's face somewhere before, but I can't see him full stroke. Weren't you with my Lord of Kemes at Arberth a few days ago, young sir?"

"Silence there!" called the Captain.

But the man was full of his discovery, and boldly announced it to the Captain now.

"All right, Bernard," the Captain replied drily; "if my young sir has been to Arberth before, it will do him no harm to go there again. As for my Lord of Kemes, he is called to Westminster, and goes thence to Dover, and thence to France, and many a young squire of these parts with him. He cares nothing for these civil squabbles between King Ned and Queen Meg."

Luned lost heart as she realized she had nothing to hope now from the Knight of Kemes. The dusk settled gloomily down on the fields, through which they travelled slowly. She took no further count of the way till she saw lights ahead and found they were on a road dark with people on foot and horseback, all hurrying towards a narrow, straggling street in a little town. The street appeared to stretch below and above a castle towering on a detached rocky mound. Luned saw that the street was dotted with wavering lights,—torches, lanterns; and in the very midst of it burned an immense bonfire. One name was on everybody's lips, and whenever the passers-by opened mouth, it was to utter the same ominous three syllables,—“Howel Farf!”

Near the bonfire a hogshead of ale had been broached, and two or three pedlers were crying out tinsel trinkets here, specifics for every ailment there, after the fashion of their craft, while a crowther was fiddling and singing a crazy ballad. But the new-comers, as one must notice, in spite of the great temptation of the bonfire, the barrel of free ale, the fiddler, and the seductive rascals with the fairings and omnipotent pills, hastened on to the chief house in the street, one of those superior hostelries maintained by abbotine economy for the refection of wayfarers.

The troop of mounted men-at-arms in whose midst Luned rode a prisoner had some trouble to clear a way for its passage up the street and through the people to the castle. The crowd, made up in motley proportions of Norman, Flemish, and Welsh ingredients, was ale-ripe and prepared for mischief. Pewter mugs and flagons of ale were thrust upon the troopers, who, nothing loth, drank as they were brought to a standstill now and again. And every time anyone offered a cup he cried out, as if he gave a toast, “Howel Farf!”

The noise, the confused lights, the bonfire, the drunkenness, gave the scene, in Luned's eyes, a kind of infernal effect. In the midst of it her thoughts darted back to Perrot, whom she had first seen at Arberth, here, within the great castle; and from Perrot they turned to

the island and its sea-quiet and the silence of Iago, in commune with the stars, and last to Malen. Ay, where was Malen now, and where Perrot? Another moment, and the gross reality of the ruddy half darkness had seized again on her senses. She grew momentarily more terrified by the moving, shouting, fire-lit faces, masked, distorted, twisted, by the red glare and the black shadows cast by the bonfire. The only thing that emerged clearly in her mind was the repeated cry of the name she most dreaded. What could it mean? Was it the hour of his triumph? If so, why were these Norman retainers of the Perrots and Mortimers allowed free passage? It was only when, after passing the bonfire, they drew near the abbot's hostelry that she recovered her composure and dared to look about her freely. As she did so, there was another check to their progress,—the Captain of the troop had pulled up to speak to a soldierly old man on horseback coming the other way. And again she seemed to catch the words when he pointed to the lighted door and open, unshuttered casement of the hostelry,—“Howel Farf!”

When they resumed their passage up the street the Captain forced a way for his horse with his sword, so as to brush rudely aside the inquisitive crowd and ride within a pace or two of the hostelry door. And where he had passed, it was easy for the serpentine tail of his troop to wend its way after him. In this wise, Luned too was carried close by the house, and could see without hinderance right into the interior of the common room, whose floor was a step or two above the street level. It was lit, as she perceived on coming near, by a rousing fire on the open hearth and by a number of candles. But it was not until she had come opposite the wide door-way that she could see how one broad table had been dragged forward so as to be easily viewed from the road without. The table was stuck with candles set in small lumps of clay, so as to give the folk without a better sight of the ghastly thing in its midst. For, behold on the table, a man's head,—lately decapitated,—set upright on a base of encrimsoned candle-clay, with a proud, ironical face, made more dreadful in its pallor by the black locks on its brow and the lustrous black beard spread before it,—the terrible head of Howel Farf.

XIX.

A WHIRLWIND PASSES.

LUNED did not reach the castle-gate with the rest of the troop; nor did she see anything that night of the dark whirlwind of men and horses that swept on the place and broke up the black wake of Howel Farf.

She was seen by her fellow-troopers swaying in her saddle, unable to keep her seat, without the hostelry; and she was lifted from her horse and carried straight into a neighboring house, where a famous old

woman (member of a mysterious craft), *Hannah-fach* by name, tended her and brought her round, and gave her a soothing draught to make her sleep. So it was she did not hear the furious hoofs of the horsemen that invaded Arberth not an hour later, nor their halloo that echoed and rang again, startling the very stones in the street. These invaders were no trim Norman troopers all of a piece and tricked out in steel, but a score of Welsh squires and gentlemen, whose accoutrements were at hap-hazard splendid or shabby. At their head rode a gaunt man on a tall black horse,—a man with a ruddy beard, and a face which looked hollow and sick and long, like that of one who had been sick almost to death. He led them on at a charge that the houses shook to feel, right up the street, and to the very door of the hostelry. There he leaped off, the scattered crowd gaping at him and his followers in wonder and terror, while he roughly seized on the nearest loiterer to hold his horse, and strode deliberately up to the door-steps and to the fatal table, which indeed was but a couple of strides from the door. It was Rhosser. His fellows made a circle about the door.

“Oh *Howel bach!*” was all he said, as he put his hand on the black head. One other had dismounted with him,—a dark young man, with mustachios curled like a bird’s feather on his cheeks, which were hardly less pale than those of the death’s-head within the house. He had ridden a fine-bred chestnut with a red leather bridle that threw up its deer-like head excitedly at the lights and noises, but was less blown by the ride hither than any horse in that wild troop. The young man entered the house with Rhosser, and turned his own face away as he handed him the black handkerchief in which he now wrapped *Howel’s* head.

Then Rhosser, as he turned to go, said “Come, *Jestyn*,” for it was *Jestyn*, who, escaping from the hurly-burly, had carried Rhosser the news of *Howel’s* death, and accompanied him thither.

As they were about to ride away *Jestyn’s* little horse neighed loudly in the street, and *Luned*, within the house of *Hannah-fach*, heard that neigh, and started up from her uneasy sleep, crying “Oh *Gringolet!*”

“What is the matter then?” asked the good woman, who probably had her suspicions about the sex of her guest.

“Oh, nothing,” said *Luned*; “I thought I was at *Rhos*;” and she fell asleep again.

Meanwhile, Rhosser and his men, intent on her rescue, rode on to the friendly shelter of a house near *Carew*, attached to lands of the *White Abbey*, and there spent the night.

But, starting early next morning for *Abereli*, they encountered *Cadno*, a pitiable figure, his face mottled, his eyes swollen with bruises, his leather tunic hanging in rags, as a result of last night’s doings, and he told them he had seen the *Maid of Rhos* on her way northward.

Alarmed at this news, they wheeled about and returned to an ale-house at Llanishen, two or three miles below Arberth, and Jestyn volunteered there to go on into Arberth and find out what had become of Luned.

There, what with his air of gentility and his impassive fine manner, he might easily pass for a visitor to the castle. The Roman visage of Hannah-fach was the first he caught sight of in the early street. Hannah-fach was standing at her own door, looking out; for, having despatched Luned on a hired pony in the escort of two dubious gentlemen, she was afraid that the sound of hoofs meant "the young squire's" return.

"The young squire," she told Jestyn, "could not have better company; the young squire would be well cared for by the two gentlemen; the young squire would have the pleasure of their company as far as St. Clear's, and all for the price of a cup of ale and a groat at the Red Lion."

Jestyn thereupon sent a messenger to Llanishen to tell Rhosser "the little squire" was gone home, and himself set off in hot pursuit. The two gentlemen of Hannah-fach, it should be observed, were really two of the pedlers whom we saw dispensing their wares by bonfire-light on Luned's arrival, and they showed such an inclination to pull up their mules at every change-house, and there to discover their wares and refresh their hearts with a little ale-tattle over last night's hearty sensations, that Luned fairly rode off and left them, at about the fifth stop. But such as they were, the pedlers had served to keep her in the right road, which she missed soon after giving them the slip. The consequence was that she took the road to Laugharne instead of to St. Clear's; and then, seeing by the way the road bore southward that she was astray, she attempted a detour that led her into a meadow full of tidal ditches on the banks of the Taf. She had still not even sighted anything like a ford, when she heard distinctly a horse following fast. She was now riding along the river-side, sometimes on the salt marsh, sometimes picking her way between tidal mud and gravel. She chirruped to her pony and whipped him up, but he made no way, and they were brought up by a deep muddy inlet, which, she saw, they must skirt ere it could be crossed. So, casting along its side, she saw the horseman coming at a rapid gallop, and making a cut across the short tide-washed turf towards her.

Fifty paces would carry her over the mud of the inlet at a safe point. Ere her starved pony had trotted even that short distance the horseman was within hail. He called; she turned, and saw it was Jestyn, and Jestyn riding Gringolet. Jestyn, to her imagination, recalled last night and Howel Farf. She was seized with terror. He called out to her to stay.

"No, I won't! I won't!" she cried, and instantly set her pony to

charge down through the awful basin of slime and mud. The pony plunged through it successfully so far, down to the stream and through the water, but failed to keep his footing on the opposite bank, where the slime was deeper.

Luned felt him slip and make desperate efforts to plant his forefeet, while the mud flew in a spattering shower all round; and then she recognized that they were taken. What was she to do? The poor beast threatened to slip back into the slimy water. He groaned, snorted, struggled furiously. She disengaged her feet from the stirrups, and was looking for any possible foothold on the mud-bank when she was aware of Jestyn and Gringolet right above them.

"Give me your hand," said Jestyn, dismounting and leaning over from the bank.

She looked up with a glance of disgust and despair.

"No!" she cried foolishly, slipping off her horse's back into the slime,—"no! no!"

But he seized her hand in spite of her, and with the other, catching the lap of the gray tunic, he gave so vigorous a tug that he landed her on safe ground, and at the same time almost tore right off a flap of the tunic.

"Now for the *merlen*," he said, and very dexterously rapping the stranded beast twice smartly under the chin with his riding-stock, he captured its reins, and thereupon, with a startling dexterity, he fairly lugged it, exhausted, out of the mire.

In doing this, he showed himself so quick and good-humored that Luned was, in spite of her feeling against him, impressed. She was too honorable to seize upon Gringolet, as she might have done, and ride away; but she had taken his reins, and was hastily looking all over his glossy coat to see that hard usage had not hurt him. Then, satisfied of this, her hand on his nose, she thought of her own torn tunic, and stood looking from its damaged skirt to her captor, her nostrils dilating, her eyes flashing defiance.

"And now, sieur?" she said, "you count me a prisoner perhaps?"

Jestyn smiled, and she noticed at once how frightfully pale his face was. "Not so, demoiselle, unless you so desire it."

"What then, sieur, if I do not?"

"Whatever you *do* desire, sweet demoiselle."

"I only want you to leave me."

"That is impossible. Your father bid me ride after you, and he is following with others. I will, if you permit me, act as your chevalier till he comes up with us, or so far as Rhos itself."

She looked in his face, doubting what he said, then, embarrassed, fell to stroking Gringolet's neck in confusion. "My father?" she said; "but my father lies a-dying on his sick-bed at Rhos."

"No," he said, "he left Rhos yesterday. You could not know. Come, the tide is flowing. There is no time to be lost. He is following, perhaps he has already passed, on the northerly road from Arberth to Rhos. Come, I can show you a short way home. Ah," he continued, "you called me a coward before, demoiselle, but you will be no worse off with me than without me, for I do happen to know the road to Rhos, and I'm afraid you don't."

The argument was sound, his bearing courteous. She put a foot in Gringolet's stirrup and was up before he could lend her a hand. She was riding on impetuously, forgetting, in her confusion, that the pony was so poor a mount for him, besides being so spent with its mud bath, when he cried out to her to turn to the right, as the riverside was not safe.

She followed his direction without question then and afterwards in that long ride to Rhos, during which they saw nothing of Rhosser. But she so far maintained her reserve as to keep Jestyn at a groom's distance, which, indeed, because of the disparity of the animals they rode, was an easy thing to do.

But once, when a heavy, tightly wedged gate at an old grange at Pensarn, a mile or more from Carmarthen, stopped her, and he came up, she was fingering ruefully the torn skirt of her tunic, when he said:

"Oh, demoiselle, you ought to sever it and give it to me for a token in memory of this sad adventure, and of your pretty hackney which I rode, and——"

"What?" she said, "this poor torn flap of my gray tunic. It is not a fit token. Besides—what could you do with it?"

"Wear it, demoiselle, on my adventures on the fields of France, where, since my dark master is dead, I go as befits a poor gentleman to seek my fortune. The Lord of Kemes has promised to take me in his company. I join him at Dover next week."

"Oh," she cried at this, feeling piqued without knowing why, "you are going to France, are you?" She could not resist adding, as the gate was opened and she rode through, "I should have thought Wales was wide enough for your courage!" And again she left him to labor slowly after her on his bemuddled pony.

It was nigh noon when they reached at last the ford over the Sarthi water, where Malen had found her on the morning of Howel's raid. When she had crossed the stream, she waited for Jestyn to come up.

"Your father," he said, "has not crossed this way, I think. There were twenty riders with him, but there are no fresh hoof-marks in the gravel."

"Oh," she said, "they would not come this way, but by the moor. But how came you to find my father?"

Jestyn turned paler at the recollections of Howel it started. "I carried the news to him."

"Oh, I see," she said, turning pale too. And she drew with a trembling hand the little silver-tricked dagger Efa had given her, and severed the torn flap of her tunic, and handed it to him. "If you are truly going to the fields of France," she said, "you may have it; but you—why, what can you do with it?"

In reply he began to fold it up so fervently, that she felt her cheeks flush red, and escaped further embarrassment by riding on.

XX.

RHOS.

THE wood-pigeons cooed in the wood as she rode up the meadow, and coming nearer, she saw a couple of young calves tethered at the ring fence and two red heifers grazing near. Every tree, every bit of old wall, brought a rapture to her heart.

There were noises, and plenty of life in the court-yard, to tell her that Rhosser and his men had come. Their horses were tethered at the gates and within the yard, and men were going to and fro between stable and hall, which made a cheerful hubbub about the place. The doors of the hall stood wide open, and the maids were carrying in green branches. Luned rode up to the door without dismounting, and then, some shyness due to her boy's garb overtaking her at sight of the threshold which she had hitherto only crossed in maid's attire, she hesitated, and finally rode Gringolet through the arched doorway right into the hall itself.

There an unusual hubbub of voices was heard. A busy throng of folk were gathered about the long table, Rhosser and his men still in their riding cloaks, prepared to ride off again in quest of her. They all turned as she rode in, pausing in mid-floor, her face like a pale flower in the umber shadows, her slender form swaying as Gringolet came to a halt. Three started up at once, and one was her mother, but another lady stood by her side. As Rhosser lifted Luned down, he strained her so heartily to his breast that her eyes were muffled in his riding-cloak and she could see nothing. But when Rhosser had cried, "My little squire!" three times, her mother remonstrated with gentle jealousy,— "Why, Rhosser, you will stifle the child!" And then all the women folk laughed and cried, and Luned saw it was the Lady of Llanfair that stood by her mother. Rhosser would have had the maid to sit down at his side at the table just as she was, but her mother would not hear of it.

She was abetted in this by the Lady of Llanfair, who said,—

"Oh Luned! we must see you in a maid's gown,—in a long white

maid's gown?" Together they carried her off up the stair, whence such joyous laughter as may be imagined reached the ears of those below.

It was at this pause that Jestynd arrived, having had to lead his pony afoot up the meadow, and with him entered Perrot, who had dropped in some way from the clouds.

When at last the three descended, Luned freshly attired in a long maiden gown of white, she was bearing the letter she had received from Dinas Moryn, and nearly lost at the hands of the Rouen Captain. And this letter Rhosser—when the capons, and manchets of bread, and mountain mutton, and mountains of beef were consumed—read aloud. In it Morgan Ola' appealed to his ancient kinsman, Rhosser, to take charge of his son Jestynd, to whom he bequeathed all those lands which Howel had alienated for his own ends.

"You need not go to France now," said the Lady of Rhos, looking keenly from that young man to her daughter.

"Nay," said Rhosser, "let him see life like a man, and then come home for a Welsh wife."

"Yes," said Jestynd, with a halting voice, looking not at Rhosser or his wife, but at Luned, "the rust of Howel (Heaven help him!) is still on me. I shall not feel free till I have seen foreign lands. Besides," he said, turning now more directly to Luned, "demoiselle, I have still to prove myself no coward."

She flushed very red.

"What is this of cowards?" cried Rhosser. "Old heart of me, maid, what do you ask of poor men? Was it not Jestynd stood siege at Castle Meyric by Howel's side,—ay, till that old cat, Cymeida, stabbed the Black Beard?"

"The Lady Cymeida?" ejaculated Luned, looking, startled, from her father to Jestynd.

Jestynd crumbled a bit of bread nervously between his fingers as he caught her eye.

"Yes, the Lady Cymeida," continued Rhosser. "Some do say my lady was paid to do it, but she had once made her court to Howel, and he laughed at her, and I doubt it was her sweet revenge. However, they did pay her for doing it: they burnt her old rat's-house about her, that is how they paid her,—Mortimer's men, I mean. But for Jestynd, he cut his way out through them, and he dragged Howel, bleeding and half suffocated, along with him. They took Howel again after, but he was dead. No one could take him alive,—ah Howel Farf; I love Howel Farf, now that he is dead and I have you back, my little maid. But for Jestynd,—it was he came for me, as I sat, sick and moping by the fire,—came for me to save Howel's head,—and it lies in the old chapel to-night. So let us hear no more talk of cowards. Jestynd has the strong hand."

"I know it," said she, smiling and getting redder than ever: "did he not tear a flap off my tunic in dragging me out of the mud of Taf?"

"What I would like to know," said the Lady of Llanfair, smiling too, "is what became of the piece?"

But Jestyn and Luned kept counsel.

"You do not remember your father?" said Luned's mother, then, to Jestyn.

"I remember him well," said Rhosser: "ay, Morgan Ola', that was Howel's blackest sin. Where lies his grave, little maid?"

"If old Malen were here she could tell you of that, and Iago, and many things most strange to hear," she said.

An unmeasurable outcry of dogs and shouting of men then came from the court-yard and almost cut off her reply.

"Go, youngster, and see what it is," said Rhosser to Perrot.

Perrot went, and returned accompanied by Malen, whose state of mud and tatters made it little surprising that the very dogs had turned on her. But Luned rose from her seat, and ran, and with many outcries and pretty welcomes, took her hand, and kissed her wizened cheeks, and set her at table above the salt in her own seat.

Rhosser fell a-grumbling at this.

"No, no," said his wife; "but for her the little maid might have whistled in vain."

With that Rhosser, remembering the rag-well, fell silent for a while.

"I owe you something, too, old woman," he said then. "What shall it be?"

"Give me the gray tunic, sweet master," said Malen eagerly; "there is luck in the gray tunic."

"You shall have it and gold in its pockets, old woman," he said. But he got up from the table, and fell to pacing the floor. Thereafter Malen always wore the gray tunic in her wanderings; and, if report says true, died in it at the last.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

WHICH BEGINS A NEW ADVENTURE.

NEXT day, her mother and the Lady of Llanfair at her side and Perrot looking wistfully on, Luned bade Jestyn farewell without the burnt and blackened gate of Rhos. Rhosser was already mounted to ride a part of the way with his guest.

"It is good to be a man," said Luned, "and to go to far countries. You will learn such wisdom there as Iago told me of, and such courtesy as never was. But you will not forget to speak Welsh, and you will come again to Rhos."

As she spoke, she whose cheeks were usually so well-colored—a soft crimson, a sun-brown soft rose—turned pale. Jestyn, whom we know for a pale cheek, turned red as he stooped and kissed her hand.

Then, Rhosser calling to him impatiently, he waved a farewell, and leaped into his saddle. As they rode off, an old brogue came flying out of the gate-way after them.

“Why, dear child, what was that?” said Luned’s mother, looking back.

“That’s for luck,” said a voice behind them. The voice was Malen’s.

THE END.

THE LITTLE CHILD

BY ALBERT BIGELOW PAYNE

A SIMPLE-hearted child was He,
And He was nothing more;
In summer days, like you and me,
He played about the door,
Or gathered, where the father toiled,
The shavings from the floor.

Sometimes He lay upon the grass,
The same as you and I,
And saw the hawks above Him pass
Like specks against the sky;
Or, clinging to the gate He watched
The stranger passing by.

A simple child, and yet, I think,
The bird-folk must have known,
The sparrow and the bobolink,
And claimed Him for their own,
And gathered round Him fearlessly
When He was all alone.

The lark, the linnet, and the dove,
The chaffinch and the wren,
They must have known His watchful love
And given their worship then;
They must have known and glorified
The child who died for men.

And when the sun at break of day
Crept in upon His hair,
I think it must have left a ray
Of unseen glory there,
A kiss of love on that little brow
For the thorns that it must wear.

THE REAL STAR OF BETHLEHEM

BY JULIA MACNAIR WRIGHT

ACROSS the dusty highways of this world a desert prophet was the forerunner of Christ the man, the Son of David, brief exile from the eternal glory. Across the magnificent pathway of the skies a resplendent star heralded among the hosts of heaven the advent of Christ the King, Creator of the universe. What was this marvellous orb which alike upon the annals of faith and romance has shone for two thousand years in mystic splendor? Dream of the painter, inspiration of the poet, emblem of religion, glowing each Christmastide with new lustre, what evoked its beauty? Where has it hidden itself in the depths of heaven? When will it come again? Who were those who first beheld its rise, who saw it climb the scintillant dome, who followed on earth its luminous way in the firmament, who saw it stand still, a celestial orb, contemplating and worshipping over Bethlehem?

The early church, ever anxious to seize for her neophytes the easiest interpretations of things, said that the pilgrims of the star were three Arabian kings, because the prophet had foretold, "Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising;" they were three, because their gifts were three; Arabians, because the three kinds of gifts were the especial treasures of Araby the Blest. From this explication there should arise before fancy's eyes a pageant of three venerable crowned ones, bearing their particular tribute in solemn state, as urns of ashes, stepping slowly across a desert land, travelling only by night, their eyes uplifted to a low-hung globe of serene, resplendent beauty, which led them on their way. Or, instructed by some more deeply studied apostles of art, our vision has been of three stately camels sweeping up like ships across Arabia's sea of sand, bearing three kings, followed by servants carrying their gifts, and through the empurpled night swinging on their way, their guide a star.

Only Matthew, the evangelist of the Hebrews' especial gospel, has told us of this homage of the Gentiles to the Nazarene King. In Matthew's day the word Magian, which he uses, had a double and distinctive sense. The Greek used it nobly of those philosophers, astronomers, and poets of the Orient whose lives were consecrated to learning. The Roman, the ape of the Greek, used it in the low sense of a sorcerer. With Matthew, using the word Magian in its good Greek sense, to name was to describe. Sons of an imperial priesthood which in its day of prime had ruled the then known world, they represented the great Magian religion of Persia, which had gathered into its bosom

"the glory of the Chaldees' excellency," the songs and prophecies of Hebraism, the passion and pride of Iran. From their lofty temple towers on the Zagros Mountains, where Roman eagles had never climbed, they looked down upon the world.

In them Science came an early worshipper to the feet of the Christ. In them the loftiest of the earth-born creeds laid its homage before Him who came from Heaven. In them the Gentile claimed Adamic brotherhood with the new Adam born in Jewry.

Matthew uses two words both of which have been translated *east*. Really Matthew says, "There came Magians from the *far East*, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star *in the East*, and are come to worship him?" Study of the geographical terms of Matthew's day makes it clear that the "far East" was Persia, and "the East" the Chaldean land and the Arabian desert where the sons of Ishmael roved.

On the heights of the mountains uncontaminated by the feet of the Legionaries dwelt the remnant of the great Magian Caste, looking for some turn in the downward trend of the ages, some help which should rescue their failing line, and set great Science herself again in supremacy—for a Deliverer who should bring in peace, holiness, and lofty thought, expound the ways of God to men, and end forever the iron days of rapine, lust, and war.

The thinkers of all ages had foretold such an one, and slowly the lines of prophecy converged upon their present time. Nightly as the years went by the Magians looked for a sign from heaven, for they were pre-eminently star-gazers, and had before them the skies like a roll of music or a geneological chart or historic tables, which he who is wise may read, for who of the wise did not know that the heavens, which declare the glory of God, declare also the destinies of nations, the advent of chosen leaders of the race, the death of conquerors and kings? They hold high the names of heroes, emblazon great deeds on deathless scrolls of fire, threaten the wicked, encourage the good, and warn the unwary. If this were not so, why should the heavens have been bent about the world like a king's pavilion, or a priest's temple dome, or the common man's roof-tree?

That these Magian guests in Judea were no mere sorcerers or desert wanderers, we have proof in that proud Herod thought them worthy of private audience and an especial session of the Sanhedrim. Philo Judæus, speaking of their pursuits, says, "A science which contemplates and investigates the books of Nature with more accurate and clear perception than is usual, and is studied by kings and the greatest of kings." These then are the goodly and mysterious guests who came to Judea some two thousand years ago, learned, noble, rich, travelling,

stately and persistent, from Persia to the Arabian land, and through it to Jerusalem.

What won them to that long and toilsome way? What so convinced them that the King had come, that they bore their gifts with them upon the weary road?

Astrology was the ancient nurse of Astronomy. Astrology nourished in its swaddling-bands that mighty science, which reaches out far beyond other physical knowledge, clasping the universe and its recon-dite laws, measuring the practically infinite, weighing the distant, grasping the mighty orbs that flame in space, and analyzing them in its spectrum, from the known predicating the invisible, and tracking in depths of æther the unknown until it is found.

The ancient astrologers slowly disentangled facts from theories and knowledge from romance; their recorded observations began that vast series of catalogued instances which built up the most splendid of the physical sciences. Groping after astronomic truths, they divided the heavenly spaces into regions or houses for readier description and reference. Then Astrology asserted herself, and the regions were assigned to various nations as the field of their forshadowed fates. Certain conjunctions of stars or planets came to have fixed prophetic meanings. The planets were named and assigned qualities and influences agreeably to their names; the impulsions which went out from them were in the line of their characteristics.

From their lofty towers the Magians, unaided except by long practised eyes and "the high, cool atmosphere," watched the splendid progress of the stellar host along its limitless way, and entered upon the fair domain of judicial astrology. Mercury, mysterious planet lurking near the sun, furtively appearing in the morning or evening twilight, was patron and aid of tricksters, thieves, gamblers, deceivers, all the early-world types of schemers, promoters, shysters, wire-pullers, lobbyists, and ward-politicians. Venus in her fair white light, appearing and disappearing, "half-concealed and half-revealed," gentle coquette of the skies, ruled love, beauty, the gay and dainty arts, social graces, affording to her protégés that light *insouciance* that knows no tremors and no regrets. Mars, flaming in red, the badge of wars, was friend and guardian of heroes and strong men—the bold, the dauntless, leaders of armies, performers of prodigies. Under his auspices demi-gods were born and held their martial way, the fiercest beasts and the most daring men were his, all those humans in whose veins flowed the tiger's blood, and to whom bears and wolves had given suck. Jupiter was lord of monarchs, conquerors, founders of empires; by him kings reigned and princes rose. Saturn was the hoary godfather of judges, teachers, logists, philosophers, the builders of nations.

As these planets wandered through the skies, they entered the

different "houses" into which the firmament was divided, and also came at varied long intervals into conjunction. Such conjunction foretold great events, according with the especial characters assigned to the particular planets whose longitude briefly coincided, and such events fell to the portion of the nation in whose celestial house the conjunction had place. Thus the Rabbi Abrabanel tells us that *Pisces* was always the Zodiacal house assigned to the Jews, and that a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces meant the arising of some mighty master of the Hebrew race. Such conjunction occurred once in eight hundred years, and had heralded the birth of Moses.

It was a cloister fancy of the Dark Ages that "the Star of Bethlehem" was some especially created star-like body, probably within our atmosphere, designed wholly for the leading of the Wise Men. The law of parsimony rejects such explication, and Science, with silent scorn, turns its back upon the bauble star, for in the glorious depths of heaven are matchless orbs which, swinging on their way into mortal ken for awhile, meet all the demands of poet and of prophet for the "Star of the King."

History affords us data for determining this wondrous star.

When the Magi arrived in Jerusalem Herod was within a few weeks of his death. The massacre of the babes of Bethlehem was one of the last of his tragic deeds. Herod died in the year of Rome 750. When "Herod inquired diligently what time the star appeared" the reply was evidently such that he thought it safe to exterminate all baby sons of Bethlehem "from two years old and under," showing that "the star" had been known to the Wise Men for at least two years before their arrival in Jerusalem, and whether its appearing had marked the conception or the birth of "the King" Herod could not decide. Recently discovered tablets at Zidon give the date of two enrollments for taxing, made under Cyrenius, governor of Syria. The first of these, during which Christ was born, was made five years before the date A.D.

We have thus to look for some remarkable stellar appearance between six and seven years prior to the usually given but universally admitted erroneous date of A.D. as we record it, when came our Lord to earth. Here one of Kepler's famous illuminations and discoveries comes forward, and is reinforced by records on the ancient and accurate calendars of the Chinese. Kepler, prince of astronomers, and in his peculiar genius last of the Magians, led the way in pointing out the astronomic facts of the years preceding the birth of the Messiah. In the year of Rome 747 the Magian astronomers, tossed with the unrest of their day, seeking, as Daniel had long before, "by books," and sharing the expectations which pervaded the world at that time, as notably appears in the fourth eclogue of Virgil, were scanning the sky for wonders, when "a sign appeared in the heavens,"—Jupiter, most brill-

lian of the hosts of night, entered into conjunction with Saturn. Slowly the glorious king of the midnight skies advanced to pay his greeting to his paler because more distant elder brother. Gradually the royal pair approached until their longitude coincided, and between them lay an apparent space of two diameters of the moon as she seems to us.

This kingly meeting was in the house of Pisces. There were many Jews of the Diaspora in Persia to tell of the Deliverer promised in their Davidian line. With renewed eagerness the Magians watched as the great planets swept apart. It was in the beauty of the May-time that the blazing brothers drew asunder. In July, as won by some potent spell, they retrograded. By the end of September Jupiter reached the climax of his splendor, being nearest the earth and nearest the sun of all his positions, and in fiery magnificence again stood close by Saturn. Slowly the two parted, as "enforced to go, but seeming still unready."

Once more the sky-born brothers sought each other's face when winter lay upon the world; and thus the year of the city 747, year of astronomic marvels, closed.

The watching Magians could not doubt that some great event was predicted, some king was foreshown in Jewry. Perhaps they discussed a journey to the Holy Land; but the way was long and hard, so they tarried on their towers until a new spring came to earth and a new wonder appeared in heaven. Once more those sleepless watchers of the night saw the mystic sign. Jupiter and Saturn again neared each other, while, most strange and fair, a third planet joined the two and crowned the night with a circle of auspicious fire,—Mars stood with his elder brothers in conjunction: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the celestial message was complete. One, sage, king, conqueror, was indicated in Judea. Summoned as by a divine voice by this recurrent wonder, the Magians set forth for Palestine. From the Persian heights the journey, taken evidently by way of Chaldea, and then westward to the Mediterranean coast, must have occupied fully seven months. Up to this point we have heavenly wonders, but not a new star.

When in 1603 and 1604 a similar conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars occurred, offering the most brilliant of all the spectacles of the night sky, Kepler observed beside the three planets a new star, large, extraordinarily brilliant, with a dazzling, changefully colored light. Not a meteor, not an appearance within our atmosphere, but far off in the sidereal heavens some glorious world, wheeling through its immense orbital track, had reached this very point in space where the high brothers of the empyrean had come into close council. Lured by the glory of their seeming, the fair stranger of the firmament stole near, a noble guest, stayed awhile, and added splendor to splendor.

The Chinese records note the appearance of this marvellous evanescent star in the year of Rome 750.

Such stars are rare, but by no means unknown phenomena of the skies. Twice in the period of the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn such splendid guests had eminent place, standing conspicuous, "as if to receive the salutations of the heavenly hosts."

Some of these periodic or evanescent stars appear once, and never within human history again grace our skies. They drift far off into space, from which they may have beamed upon our world when it was without form and void, and where they may beam again when earth has faded in her place like a flower, and is drooping, cold, and dead. One of these periodic stars shone B.C. 125, another in A.D. 389. The one in 1572 burst forth suddenly in a place empty half an hour before, and was as visible to the naked eye as the brightest planet. Tycho Brahe found a group of country folk gazing wide-eyed upon the amazing visitant to Danish skies. It shone from November until March.

One of these temporary guests in our heavens has been described as "first of dazzling white, then reddish yellow, fading into ashen gray," and fainting into the dark from whence it came.

The appearances of these temporary stars are so brief that we cannot attribute their periodic visibility entirely to the position attained in their orbital track. Were this the sole reason, it is clear that once in view they must shine steadily upon us, until, progressing in their journey through the skies, they are again lost in distance as before they came. On the contrary, the temporary star will shine for hours, or for days, with great brilliancy, then fade from sight, and soon reappear. After several such erratic exhibitions, it will be seen no more. We conclude that the temporary star becomes visible to earth-dwellers because it has reached a position in its orbit which brings it within our range of vision, and because also at that very time it is in a state of excessive combustion which immensely enhances its splendor. All stars are suns. Our sun has periods of chemical activity when it shoots forth burning spires forty or fifty thousand or many more miles high. These jets of flame vary some thousands of miles in height within a few hours. Possibly the variable and temporary stars have periods of intense combustion to which the excitements and coruscations of our sun are faint as the flame of a lucifer match. Given such enormous ebullitions of fiery light just at the period when the star in its orbit moves into our line of vision, the usually unseen world flames out a gorgeous temporary star, palpitating with splendor of vari-colored light, challenging amazement and admiration as when that royal star drew near the conjoined planets in Oriental skies. There were in the year of Rome 747 three splendid conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter in Pisces. In 748 A. U. C., two years before the now accepted date of Messiah's birth, there was a fourth conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn with Mars added. In 750 A. U. C. the Wise Men, arriving in Jerusalem, gave to Herod a date of

two years previous as the appearing of celestial tokens of a new King. Herod died in March, 750 A.U.C. There is an astronomic probability amounting almost to certainty, and further guaranteed by the Chinese records, that the conjunction of the three planets was in 748 A.U.C., accompanied by a remarkable temporary star, as has since occurred in such conjunction. Such temporary stars flame and fade, appear and disappear and reappear, before they vanish finally. Such a star seen in Persia, hiding itself during part or all of the journey,—probably only for part, for the Magi claim to have seen it in Chaldea or Arabia as they came,—burst forth upon their eyes as they left Jerusalem. This last splendid exhibition caused them “to rejoice with exceeding great joy.” It seemed to sweep before them on a southward path as they went towards Bethlehem, and then as they entered the presence of the King his star withdrew its shining, and veiled itself in the depths of space and night.

AT NAZARETH

BY THOMAS WALSH

FROM the black embers of the wintry earth
 The west withdraws the reddening flame of day;
 So ends the seventh annual of my birth—
 And see! a Star—to mock our brazier gray.
 Dost thou remember how at hours like these,—
 Yea, Mother, I was not too young to know,—
 Thou wouldst get humbly down upon thy knees,
 And, opening wide our rustic coffer, show
 The Magi's golden tributes treasured there:
 The casket with its heap of gleaming stones
 And coins of mystic kingdoms old and rare;
 The incense arks, the myrrh's bejewelled cones
 With countless hieroglyphics graven o'er:
 These wouldst thou lift into my baby hands
 Till lap and breast and arms could hold no more;
 Then, pouring out the precious incense sands
 Over the brazier coals, while all the room
 Grew white with wreathing odors sanctified,
 Thou wouldst prostrate thyself amid the gloom,
 Sweet Mother, on the ground before thy Child.
 To-night there is no incense for thy Son:
 The chill wind finds the brazier black as death;
 Nay, do not kneel—here, here, my breast upon,
 Let starlight show the vapor of thy breath.

THE MAGIC OF A VOICE

BY WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

Author of "A Hazard of New Fortunes," "The Landlord at Lion's Head," etc.

I.

HERE was a full moon, and Langbourne walked about the town, unable to come into the hotel and go to bed. The deep yards of the houses gave out the scent of syringas and June roses; the light of lamps came through the fragrant bushes from the open doors and windows, with the sound of playing and singing and bursts of young laughter. Where the houses stood near the street, he could see people lounging on the thresholds, and their heads silhouetted against the luminous interiors. Other houses, both those which stood further back and those that stood nearer, were dark and still, and to those he attributed the happiness of love in fruition, safe from the unrest of hope and longing.

His own heart was tenderly oppressed, not with desire, but the memory of desire. It was almost as if in his faded melancholy he were sorry for the disappointment of some one else.

At last he turned and walked back through the streets of dwellings to the business centre of the town, where a gush of light came from the veranda of his hotel, and the druggist's window cast purple and yellow blurs out upon the footway. The other stores were shut, and he alone seemed to be abroad. The church clock struck ten as he mounted the steps of his hotel and dropped the remnant of his cigar over the side.

He had slept badly on the train the night before, and he had promised himself to make up his lost sleep in the good conditions that seemed to offer themselves. But when he sat down in the hotel office he was more wakeful than he had been when he started out to walk himself drowsy.

The clerk gave him the New York paper which had come by the evening train, and he thanked him, but remained musing in his chair. At times he thought he would light another cigar, but the hand that he carried to his breast pocket dropped nervelessly to his knee again, and he did not smoke. Through his memories of disappointment pierced a self-reproach which did not permit him the perfect self-complacency of regret; and yet he could not have been sure, if he had asked himself, that this pang did not heighten the luxury of his psychological experience.

He rose and asked the clerk for a lamp, but he turned back from the stairs to inquire when there would be another New York mail. The clerk said there was a train from the south due at eleven-forty, but it

seldom brought any mail; there was another mail at nine. Langbourne thanked him, and came back again to beg the clerk to be careful and not have him called in the morning, for he wished to sleep. Then he went up to his room, where he opened his window to let in the night air. He heard a dog barking; a cow lowed; from a stable somewhere the soft thumping of the horses' feet came at intervals lullingly.

II.

LANGBOURNE fell asleep so quickly that he was aware of no moment of waking after his head touched the fragrant pillow. He woke so much refreshed by his first sound, soft sleep that he thought it must be nearly morning. He got his watch into a ray of the moonlight and made out that it was only a little after midnight, and he perceived that it must have been the sound of low murmuring voices and broken laughter in the next room which had wakened him. But he was rather glad to have been roused to a sense of his absolute comfort, and he turned unresentfully to sleep again. All his heaviness of heart was gone; he felt curiously glad and young; he had somehow forgiven the wrong he had suffered and the wrong he had done. The subdued murmuring went on in the next room, and he kept himself awake to enjoy it for a while. Then he let himself go, and drifted away into gulfs of slumber, where, suddenly, he seemed to strike against something, and started up in bed.

A laugh came from the next room. It was not muffled, as before, but frank and clear. It was woman's laughter, and Langbourne easily inferred girlhood as well as womanhood from it. His neighbors must have come by the late train, and they had probably begun to talk as soon as they got into their room. He imagined their having spoken low at first for fear of disturbing some one, and then, in their forgetfulness, or their belief that there was no one near, allowed themselves greater freedom. There were survivals of their earlier caution at times, when their voices sank so low as scarcely to be heard; then there was a break from it when they rose clearly distinguishable from each other. They were never so distinct that he could make out what was said; but each voice unmistakably conveyed character.

Friendship between girls is never equal; they may equally love each other, but one must worship and one must suffer worship. Langbourne read the differing temperaments necessary to this relation in the differing voices. That which bore mastery was a low, thick murmur, coming from deep in the throat, and flowing out in a steady stream of indescribable coaxing and drolling. The owner of that voice had imagination and humor which could charm with absolute control her companion's lighter nature, as it betrayed itself in a gay tinkle of amusement and a succession of nervous whispers. Langbourne did not

wonder at her subjection; with the first sounds of that rich, tender voice, he had fallen under its spell too; and he listened intensely, trying to make out some phrase, some word, some syllable. But the talk kept its subaudible flow, and he had to content himself as he could with the sound of the voice.

As he lay eavesdropping with all his might he tried to construct an image of the two girls from their voices. The one with the crystalline laugh was little and lithe, quick in movement, of a mobile face, with gray eyes and fair hair; the other was tall and pale, with full, blue eyes and a regular face, and lips that trembled with humor; very demure and yet very honest; very shy and yet very frank; there was something almost mannish in her essential honesty; there was nothing of feminine coquetry in her, though everything of feminine charm. She was a girl who looked like her father, Langbourne perceived with a flash of divination. She dressed simply in dark blue, and her hair was of a dark mahogany color. The smaller girl wore light gray checks or stripes, and the shades of silver.

The talk began to be less continuous in the next room, from which there came the sound of sighs and yawns, and then of mingled laughter at these. Then the talk ran unbrokenly on for a while, and again dropped into laughs that recognized the drowsy creeping upon the talkers. Suddenly it stopped altogether, and left Langbourne, as he felt, definitively awake for the rest of the night.

He had received an impression which he could not fully analyze. With some inner sense he kept hearing that voice, low and deep, and rich with whimsical suggestion. Its owner must have a strange, complex nature, which would perpetually provoke and satisfy. Her companionship would be as easy and reasonable as a man's, while it had the charm of a woman's. At the moment it seemed to him that life without this companionship would be something poorer and thinner than he had yet known, and that he could not endure to forego it. Somehow he must manage to see the girl and to make her acquaintance. He did not know how it could be contrived, but it could certainly be contrived, and he began to dramatize their meeting on these various terms. It was interesting and it was delightful, and it always came, in its safe impossibility, to his telling her that he loved her, and to her consenting to be his wife. He resolved to take no chance of losing her, but to remain awake, and somehow see her before she could leave the hotel in the morning. The resolution gave him calm; he felt that the affair so far was settled.

Suddenly he started from his pillow; and again he heard that mellow laugh, warm and rich as the cooing of doves on sunlit eaves. The sun was shining through the crevices of his window-blinds; he looked at his watch; it was half-past eight. The sound of fluttering

skirts and flying feet in the corridor shook his heart. A voice, the voice of the mellow laugh, called as if to some one on the stairs, "I must have put it in my bag. It doesn't matter, anyway."

He hurried on his clothes, in the vain hope of finding his late neighbors at breakfast; but before he had finished dressing he heard wheels before the veranda below, and he saw the hotel barge drive away, as if to the station. There were two passengers in it; two women, whose faces were hidden by the fringe of the barge-roof, but whose slender figures showed themselves from their necks down. It seemed to him that one was tall and slight, and the other slight and little.

III.

HE stopped in the hall, and then, tempted by his despair, he stepped within the open door of the next room and looked vaguely over it, with shame at being there. What was it that the girl had missed, and had come back to look for? Some trifle, no doubt, which she had not cared to lose, and yet had not wished to leave behind. He failed to find anything in the search, which he could not make very thorough, and he was going guiltily out when his eye fell upon an envelope, perversely fallen beside the door and almost indiscernible against the white paint, with the addressed surface inward.

This must be the object of her search, and he could understand why she was not very anxious when he found it a circular from a nurseryman containing nothing more valuable than a list of flowering shrubs. He satisfied himself that this was all without satisfying himself that he had quite a right to do so; and he stood abashed in the presence of the superscription on the envelope somewhat as if Miss Barbara F. Simpson, Upper Ashton Falls, N. H., were there to see him tampering with her correspondence. It was indelicate, and he felt that his whole behavior had been indelicate, from the moment her laugh had wakened him in the night till now, when he had invaded her room. He had no more doubt that she was the taller of the two girls than that this was her name on the envelope. He liked Barbara; and Simpson could be changed. He seemed to hear her soft throaty laugh in response to the suggestion, and with a leap of the heart he slipped the circular into his breast pocket.

After breakfast he went to the hotel office, and stood leaning on the long counter and talking with the clerk till he could gather courage to look at the register, where he knew the names of these girls must be written. He asked where Upper Ashton Falls was, and whether it would be a pleasant place to spend a week.

The clerk said that it was about thirty miles up the road, and was one of the nicest places in the mountains; Langbourne could not go to

a nicer; and there was a very good little hotel. "Why," he said, "there were two ladies here overnight that just left for there, on the seven-forty. Odd you should ask about it."

Langbourne owned that it was odd, and then he asked if the ladies lived at Upper Ashton Falls, or were merely summer folks.

"Well, a little of both," said the clerk. "They're cousins, and they've got an aunt living there that they stay with. They used to go away winters,—teaching, I guess,—but this last year they stayed right through. Been down to Springfield, they said, and just stopped the night because the accommodation don't go any farther. Wake you up last night? I had to put 'em into the room next to yours, and girls usually talk."

Langbourne answered that it would have taken a good deal of talking to wake him the night before, and then he lounged across to the time-table hanging on the wall, and began to look up the trains for Upper Ashton Falls.

"If you want to go to the Falls," said the clerk, "there's a through train at four, with a drawing-room on it, that will get you there by five."

"Oh, I fancy I was looking up the New York trains," Langbourne returned. He did not like these evasions, but in his consciousness of Miss Simpson he seemed unable to escape them. The clerk went out on the veranda to talk with a farmer bringing supplies, and Langbourne ran to the register, and read there the names of Barbara F. Simpson and Juliet D. Bingham. It was Miss Simpson who had registered for both, since her name came first, and the entry was in a good, simple hand, which was like a man's in its firmness and clearness. He turned from the register decided to take the four o'clock train for Upper Ashton Falls, and met a messenger with a telegram which he knew was for himself before the boy could ask his name. His partner had fallen suddenly sick; his recall was absolute, his vacation was at an end; nothing remained for him but to take the first train back to New York. He thought how little prescient he had been in his pretence that he was looking the New York trains up; but the need of one had come already, and apparently he should never have any use for a train to Upper Ashton Falls.

IV.

ALL the way back to New York Langbourne was oppressed by a sense of loss such as his old disappointment in love now seemed to him never to have inflicted. He found that his whole being had set towards the unseen owner of the voice which had charmed him, and it was like a stretching and tearing of the nerves to be going from her instead of going to her. He was as much under duress as if he were bound by a hypnotic spell. The voice continually sounded, not in his ears, which

were filled with the noises of the train, as usual, but in the inmost of his spirit, where it was a low, cooing, coaxing, drolling murmur. He realized now how intensely he must have listened for it in the night, how every tone of it must have pervaded him and possessed him. He was in love with it, he was as entirely fascinated by it as if it were the girl's whole presence, her looks, her qualities.

The remnant of the summer passed in the fret of business, which was doubly irksome through his feeling of injury in being kept from the girl whose personality he constructed from the sound of her voice, and set over his fancy in an absolute sovereignty. The image he had created of her remained a dim and blurred vision throughout the day, but by night it became distinct and compelling. One evening, late in the fall, he could endure the stress no longer, and he yielded to the temptation which had beset him from the first moment he renounced his purpose of returning in person the circular addressed to her as a means of her acquaintance. He wrote to her, and in terms as dignified as he could contrive, and as free from any ulterior import, he told her he had found it in the hotel hallway and had meant to send it to her at once, thinking it might be of some slight use to her. He had failed to do this, and now, having come upon it among some other papers, he sent it with an explanation which he hoped she would excuse him for troubling her with.

This was not true, but he did not see how he could begin with her by saying that he had found the circular in her room, and had kept it by him ever since, looking at it every day, and leaving it where he could see it the last thing before he slept at night and the first thing after he woke in the morning. As to her reception of his story, he had to trust to his knowledge that she was, like himself, of country birth and breeding, and to his belief that she would not take alarm at his overture. He did not go much into the world and was little acquainted with its usages, yet he knew enough to suspect that a woman of the world would either ignore his letter and its enclosure, or would return a cold and snubbing expression of Miss Simpson's thanks for Mr. Stephen M. Langbourne's kindness.

He had not only signed his name and given his address carefully in hopes of a reply, but he had enclosed the business card of his firm as a token of his responsibility. The partner in a wholesale stationery house ought to be an impressive figure in the imagination of a village girl; but it was some weeks before any answer came to Langbourne's letter. The reply began with an apology for the delay, and Langbourne perceived that he had gained rather than lost by the writer's hesitation; clearly she believed that she had put herself in the wrong, and that she owed him a certain reparation. For the rest, her letter was discreetly confined to an acknowledgment of the trouble he had taken.

But this spare return was richly enough for Langbourne; it would have sufficed, if there had been nothing in the letter, that the hand-writing proved Miss Simpson to have been the one who had made the entry of her name and her friend's in the hotel register. This was most important as one step in corroboration of the fact that he had rightly divined her; that the rest should come true was almost a logical necessity. Still, he was puzzled to contrive a pretext for writing again, and he remained without one for a fortnight. Then, in passing a seedsman's store which he used to pass every day without thinking, he one day suddenly perceived his opportunity. He went in and got a number of the catalogues and other advertisements, and addressed them then and there, in a wrapper the seedsman gave him, to Miss Barbara F. Simpson, Upper Ashton Falls, N. H.

Now the response came with a promptness which at least testified of the lingering compunction of Miss Simpson. She asked if she were right in supposing the seedsman's catalogues and folders had come to her from Langbourne, and begged to know from him whether the seedsman in question was reliable: it was so difficult to get garden seeds that one could trust.

The correspondence now established itself, and with one excuse or another it prospered throughout the winter. Langbourne was not only willing, he was most eager, to give her proof of his reliability; he spoke of stationers in Springfield and Greenfield to whom he was personally known; and he secretly hoped she would satisfy herself through friends in those places that he was an upright and trustworthy person.

Miss Simpson wrote delightful letters, with that whimsical quality in them which had enchanted him in her voice. The coaxing and caressing was not there, and could not be expected to impart itself, unless in those refuges of deep feeling supposed to lurk between the lines. But he hoped to provoke it from these in time, and his own letters grew the more earnest the more ironical hers became. He wrote to her about a book he was reading, and when she said she had not seen it, he sent it her; in one of her letters she casually betrayed that she sang contralto in the choir, and then he sent her some new songs, which he had heard in the theatre, and which he had informed himself from a friend were contralto. He was always tending to an expression of the feeling which swayed him; but on her part there was no sentiment. Only in the fact that she was willing to continue this exchange of letters with a man personally unknown to her did she betray that romantic tradition which underlies all our young life, and in those unused to the world tempts to things blameless in themselves, but of the sort shunned by the worldlier wise. There was no great wisdom of any kind in Miss Simpson's letters; but Langbourne did not miss it; he was content with her mere words, as they related the little events of her simple daily life.

These repeated themselves from the page in the tones of her voice and filled him with a passionate intoxication.

Towards spring he had his photograph taken, for no reason that he could have given; but since it was done he sent one to his mother in Vermont, and then he wrote his name on another, and sent it to Miss Simpson in New Hampshire. He hoped, of course, that she would return a photograph of herself; but she merely acknowledged his with some dry playfulness. Then, after disappointing him so long that he ceased to expect anything, she enclosed a picture. The face was so far averted that Langbourne could get nothing but the curve of a longish cheek, the point of a nose, the segment of a crescent eyebrow. The girl said that as they should probably never meet, it was not necessary he should know her when he saw her; she explained that she was looking away because she had been attracted by something on the other side of the photograph gallery just at the moment the artist took the cap off the tube of his camera, and she could not turn back without breaking the plate.

Langbourne replied that he was going up to Springfield on business the first week in May, and that he thought he might push on as far north as Upper Ashton Falls. To this there came no rejoinder whatever, but he did not lose courage. It was now the end of April, and he could bear to wait for a further verification of his ideal; the photograph had confirmed him in its evasive fashion at every point of his conjecture concerning her. It was the face he had imagined her having, or so he now imagined, and it was just such a long oval face as would go with the figure he attributed to her. She must have the healthy pallor of skin which associates itself with masses of dark, mahogany-colored hair.

V.

It was so long since he had known a Northern spring that he had forgotten how much later the beginning of May was in New Hampshire; but as his train ran up from Springfield he realized the difference of the season from that which he had left in New York. The meadows were green only in the damp hollows; most of the trees were as bare as in midwinter; the willows in the swamplands hung out their catkins, and the white birches showed faint signs of returning life. In the woods were long drifts of snow, though he knew that in the brown leaves along their edges the pale pink flowers of the trailing arbutus were hiding their wet faces. A vernal mildness overhung the landscape. A blue haze filled the distances and veiled the hills; from the farm door-yards the smell of burning leaf-heaps and garden-stalks came through the window which he lifted to let in the dull warm air. The sun shone down from a pale sky, in which the crows called to one another.

By the time he arrived at Upper Ashton Falls the afternoon had waned so far towards evening that the first robins were singing their vespers from the leafless choirs of the maples before the hotel. He indulged the landlord in his natural supposition that he had come up to make a timely engagement for summer board; after supper he even asked what the price of such rooms as his would be by the week in July, while he tried to lead the talk round to the fact which he wished to learn.

He did not know where Miss Simpson lived; and the courage with which he had set out on his adventure totally lapsed, leaving in its place an accusing sense of silliness. He was where he was without reason, and in defiance of the tacit unwillingness of the person he had come to see; she certainly had given him no invitation, she had given him no permission to come. For the moment, in his shame, it seemed to him that the only thing for him was to go back to New York by the first train in the morning. But what then would the girl think of him? Such an act must forever end the intercourse which had now become an essential part of his life. That voice which had haunted him so long, was he never to hear it again? Was he willing to renounce forever the hope of hearing it?

He sat at his supper so long, nervelessly turning his doubts over in his mind, that the waitress came out of the kitchen and drove him from the table with her severe, impatient stare.

He put on his hat, and with his overcoat on his arm he started out for a walk which was hopeless, but not so aimless as he feigned to himself. The air was lulling warm still as he followed the long village street down the hill towards the river, where the lunge of rapids filled the dusk with a sort of humid uproar; then he turned and followed it back past the hotel as far as it led towards the open country. At the edge of the village he came to a large, old-fashioned house, which struck him as typical, with its outward swaying fence of the Greek border pattern, and its gate-posts topped by tilting urns of painted wood. The house itself stood rather far back from the street, and as he passed it he saw that it was approached by a pathway of brick which was bordered with box. Stalks of last year's hollyhocks and lilacs from garden beds on either hand lifted their sharp points, here and there broken and hanging down. It was curious how these details insisted through the twilight.

He walked on until the wooden village pathway ended in the country mud, and then again he returned up upon his steps. As he reapproached the house he saw lights. A brighter radiance streamed from the hall door, which was apparently open, and a softer glow flushed the windows of one of the rooms that flanked the hall.

As Langbourne came abreast of the gate the tinkle of a gay laugh

rang out to him; then ensued a murmur of girls' voices in the room, and suddenly this stopped, and the voice that he knew, the voice that seemed never to have ceased to sound in his nerves and pulses, rose in singing words set to the Spanish air of *La Paloma*.

It was one of the songs he had sent to Miss Simpson, but he did not need this material proof that it was she whom he now heard. There was no question of what he should do. All doubt, all fear, had vanished; he had again but one impulse, one desire, one purpose. But he lingered at the gate till the song ended, and then he unlatched it and started up the walk towards the door. It seemed to him a long way; he almost reeled as he went; he fumbled tremulously for the bell-pull beside the door, while a confusion of voices in the adjoining room—the voices which had waked him from his sleep, and which now sounded like voices in a dream—came out to him.

The light from the lamp hanging in the hall shone full in his face, and the girl who came from that room beside it to answer his ring gave a sort of conscious jump at sight of him as he uncovered and stood bareheaded before her.

VI.

SHE must have recognized him from the photograph he had sent, and in stature and figure he recognized her as the ideal he had cherished, though her head was gilded with the light from the lamp, and he could not make out whether her hair was dark or fair; her face was of course a mere outline, without color or detail against the luminous interior.

He managed to ask, dry-tongued and with a heart that beat into his throat, "Is Miss Simpson at home?" and the girl answered, with a high, gay tinkle:

"Yes, she's at home. Won't you walk in?"

He obeyed, but at the sound of the silvery voice his heart dropped back into his breast. He put his hat and coat on an entry chair, and prepared to follow her into the room she had come out of. The door stood ajar, and he said, as she put out her hand to push it open, "I am Mr. Langbourne."

"Oh, yes," she answered in the same high, gay tinkle, which he fancied had now a note of laughter in it.

An elderly woman of a ladylike village type was sitting with some needle-work beside a little table, and a young girl turned on a piano-stool and rose to receive him. "My aunt, Mrs. Simpson, Mr. Langbourne," said the girl who introduced him to these presences, and she added, indicating the girl at the piano, "Miss Simpson."

They all three bowed silently, and in the hush the sheet on the music frame slid from the piano with a sharp clash, and skated across the floor to Langbourne's feet. It was the song of *La Paloma* which she had

been singing; he picked it up, and she received it from him with a drooping head, and an effect of guilty embarrassment.

She was short and of rather a full figure, though not too full. She was not plain, but she was by no means the sort of beauty who had lived in Langbourne's fancy for the year past. The oval of her face was square; her nose was arched; she had a pretty, pouting mouth, and below it a deep dimple in her chin; her eyes were large and dark, and they had the questioning look of near-sighted eyes; her hair was brown. There was a humorous tremor in her lips, even with the prim stress she put upon them in saying "Oh, thank you," in a thick whisper of the voice he knew.

"And I," said the other girl, "am Juliet Bingham. Won't you sit down, Mr. Langbourne?" She pushed towards him the arm-chair before her, and he dropped into it. She took her place on the hair-cloth sofa, and Miss Simpson sank back upon the piano-stool with a painful provisionality, while her eyes sought Miss Bingham's in a sort of admiring terror.

Miss Bingham was easily mistress of the situation; she did not try to bring Miss Simpson into the conversation, but she contrived to make Mrs. Simpson ask Langbourne when he had arrived at Upper Ashton Falls; and she herself asked him when he had left New York, with many apposite suppositions concerning the difference in the season in the two latitudes. She presumed he was staying at the Falls House, and she said, always in her high, gay tinkle, that it was very pleasant there in the summer time. He did not know what he answered. He was aware that from time to time Miss Simpson said something in a frightened undertone. He did not know how long it was before Mrs. Simpson made an errand out of the room, in the abeyance which age practises before youthful society in the country; he did not know how much longer it was before Miss Bingham herself jumped actively up, and said, Now she would run over to Jenny's, if Mr. Langbourne would excuse her, and tell her that they could not go the next day.

"It will do just as well in the morning," Miss Simpson pitifully entreated.

"No, she's got to know to-night," said Miss Bingham, and she said she should find Mr. Langbourne there when she got back. He knew that in compliance with the simple village tradition he was being purposely left alone with Miss Simpson, as rightfully belonging to her. Miss Bingham betrayed no intentionality to him, but he caught a glimpse of mocking consciousness in the sidelong look she gave Miss Simpson as she went out; and if he had not known before he perceived then, in the vanishing oval of her cheek, the corner of her arched eyebrow, the point of her classic nose, the original of the photograph he had been treasuring as Miss Simpson's.

VII.

"It was *her* picture I sent you," said Miss Simpson. She was the first to break the silence to which Miss Bingham abandoned them, but she did not speak till her friend had closed the outer door behind her and was tripping down the brick walk to the gate.

"Yes," said Langbourne, in a dryness which he could not keep himself from using.

The girl must have felt it, and her voice faltered a very little as she continued. "We—I—did it for fun. I meant to tell you. I—"

"Oh, that's all right," said Langbourne. "I had no business to expect yours, or to send you mine." But he believed that he had; that his faithful infatuation had somehow earned him the right to do what he had done, and to hope for what he had not got; without formulating the fact, he divined that she believed it too. Between the man-soul and the woman-soul it can never go so far as it had gone in their case without giving them claims upon each other which neither can justly deny.

She did not attempt to deny it. "I oughtn't to have done it, and I ought to have told you at once—the next letter—but I—you said you were coming, and I thought if you did come—I didn't really expect you to; and it was all a joke,—off-hand."

It was very lame, but it was true, and it was piteous; yet Langbourne could not relent. His grievance was not with what she had done, but what she was; not what she really was, but what she materially was; her looks, her figure, her stature, her whole presence, so different from that which he had been carrying in his mind, and adoring for a year past.

If it was ridiculous, and if with her sense of the ridiculous she felt it so, she was unable to take it lightly, or to make him take it lightly. At some faint gleams which passed over her face he felt himself invited to regard it less seriously; but he did not try, even provisionally, and they fell into a silence that neither seemed to have the power of breaking.

It must be broken, however; something must be done; they could not sit there dumb forever. He looked at the sheet of music on the piano and said, "I see you have been trying that song. Do you like it?"

"Yes, very much," and now for the first time she got her voice fairly above a whisper. She took the sheet down from the music-rest and looked at the picture of the lithographed title. It was of a tiled roof lifted among cypresses and laurels with pigeons strutting on it and sailing over it.

"It was that picture," said Langbourne, since he must say something, "that I believe I got the song for; it made me think of the roof of an old Spanish house I saw in Southern California."

"It must be nice, out there," said Miss Simpson, absently staring at the picture. She gathered herself together to add, pointlessly, "Juliet says she's going to Europe. Have you ever been?"

"Not to Europe, no," said Langbourne. "I always feel as if I wanted to see my own country first. Is she going soon?"

"Who? Juliet? Oh, no! She was just saying so. I don't believe she's engaged her passage yet."

There was invitation to greater ease in this, and her voice began to have the tender coaxing quality which had thrilled his heart when he heard it first. But the space of her variance from his ideal was between them, and the voice reached him faintly across it.

The situation grew more and more painful for her, he could see, as well as for him. She too was feeling the anomaly of their having been intimates without being acquaintances. They necessarily met as strangers after the exchange of letters in which they had spoken with the confidence of friends.

Langbourne cast about in his mind for some middle ground where they could come together without that effect of chance encounter which had reduced them to silence. He could not recur to any of the things they had written about; so far from wishing to do this, he had almost a terror of touching upon them by accident, and he felt that she shrank from them too, as if they involved a painful misunderstanding which could not be put straight.

He asked questions about Upper Ashton Falls, but these led up to what she had said of it in her letters; he tried to speak of the winter in New York, and he remembered that every week he had given her a full account of his life there. They must go beyond their letters or they must fall far back of them.

VIII.

In their attempts to talk he was aware that she was seconding all his endeavors with intelligence, and with a humorous subtlety to which he could not pretend. She was suffering from their anomalous position as much as he, but she had the means of enjoying it while he had not. After half an hour of these defeats Mrs. Simpson operated a diversion by coming in with two glasses of lemonade on a tray and some slices of sponge-cake. She offered this refreshment first to Langbourne and then to her niece, and they both obediently took a glass, and put a slice of cake in the saucer which supported the glass. She said to each in turn, "Won't you take some lemonade? Won't you have a piece of cake?" and then went out with her empty tray, and the air of having fulfilled the duties of hospitality to her niece's company.

"I don't know," said Miss Simpson, "but it's rather early in the season for *cold* lemonade," and Langbourne, instead of laughing, as her tone invited him to do, said:

"It's very good, I'm sure." But this seemed too stiffly ungracious, and he added: "What delicious sponge-cake! You never get this out of New England."

"We have to do something to make up for our doughnuts," Miss Simpson suggested.

"Oh, I like doughnuts too," said Langbourne. "But you can't get the right kind of doughnuts, either, in New York."

They began to talk about cooking. He told her of the tamales which he had first tasted in San Francisco, and afterwards found superabundantly in New York; they both made a great deal of the topic; Miss Simpson had never heard of tamales. He became solemnly animated in their exegesis, and she showed a resolute interest in them.

They were in the midst of the forced discussion, when they heard a quick foot on the brick walk, but they had both fallen silent when Miss Bingham flounced elastically in upon them. She seemed to take in with the keen glance which swept them from her lively eyes that they had not been getting on, and she had the air of taking them at once in hand.

"Well, it's all right about Jenny," she said to Miss Simpson. "She'd a good deal rather go day after to-morrow, anyway. What have you been talking about? I don't want to make you go over the same ground. Have you got through with the weather? The moon's out, and it feels more like the beginning of June than the last of April. I shut the front door against dor-bugs; I couldn't help it, though they won't be here for six weeks yet. Do you have dor-bugs in New York, Mr. Langbourne?"

"I don't know. There may be some in the Park," he answered.

"We think a great deal of our dor-bugs in Upper Ashton," said Miss Simpson demurely, looking down. "We don't know what we should do without them."

"Lemonade!" exclaimed Miss Bingham, catching sight of the glasses and saucers on the corner of the piano, where Miss Simpson had allowed Langbourne to put them. "Has Aunt Elmira been giving you lemonade while I was gone? I will just see about that!" She whipped out of the room, and was back in a minute with a glass in one hand and a bit of sponge-cake between the fingers of the other. "She had kept some for me! Have you sung *Paloma* for Mr. Langbourne, Barbara?"

"No," said Barbara, "we hadn't got round to it, quite."

"Oh, do!" Langbourne entreated, and he wondered that he had not asked her before; it would have saved them from each other.

"Wait a moment," cried Juliet Bingham, and she gulped the last draught of her lemonade upon a final morsel of sponge-cake, and was down at the piano while still dusting the crumbs from her fingers. She struck the refractory sheet of music flat upon the rack with her palm,

and then tilted her head over her shoulder towards Langbourne, who had risen with some vague notion of turning the sheets of the song.
"Do you sing?"

"Oh, no. But I like——"

"Are you ready, Bab?" she asked, ignoring him; and she dashed into the accompaniment.

He sat down in his chair behind the two girls, where they could not see his face.

Barbara began rather weakly, but her voice gathered strength, and then poured full volume to the end, where it weakened again. He knew that she was taking refuge from him in the song, and in the magic of her voice he escaped from the disappointment he had been suffering. He let his head drop and his eyelids fall, and in the rapture of her singing he got back what he had lost; or rather, he lost himself again to the illusion which had grown so precious to him.

Juliet Bingham sounded the last note almost as she rose from the piano; Barbara passed her handkerchief over her forehead, as if to wipe the heat from it, but he believed that this was a ruse to dry her eyes in it: they shone with a moist brightness in the glimpse he caught of them.

He had risen, and they all stood talking; or they all stood, and Juliet talked. She did not offer to sit down again, and after stiffly thanking them both, he said he must be going, and took leave of them. Juliet gave his hand a nervous grip; Barbara's touch was lax and cold; the parting with her was painful; he believed that she felt it so as much as he.

The girls' voices followed him down the walk,—Juliet's treble, and Barbara's contralto,—and he believed that they were making talk purposely against a pressure of silence, and did not know what they were saying. It occurred to him that they had not asked how long he was staying, or invited him to come again: he had not thought to ask if he might; and in the intolerable inconclusiveness of this ending he faltered at the gate till the lights in the windows of the parlor disappeared, as if carried into the hall, and then they winked into darkness. From an upper entry window, which reddened with a momentary flash and was then darkened, a burst of mingled laughter came. The girls must have thought him beyond hearing, and he fancied the laugh a burst of hysterical feeling in them both.

IX.

LANGBOURNE went to bed as soon as he reached his hotel because he found himself spent with the experience of the evening; but as he rested from his fatigue he grew wakeful, and he tried to get its whole

measure and meaning before him. He had a methodical nature, with a necessity for order in his motions, and he now balanced one fact against another none the less passionately because the process was a series of careful recognitions. He perceived that the dream in which he had lived for the year past was not wholly an illusion. One of the girls whom he had heard but not seen was what he had divined her to be: a dominant influence, a control to which the other was passively obedient. He had not erred greatly as to the face or figure of the superior, but he had given all the advantages to the wrong person. The voice, indeed, the spell which had bound him, belonged with the one to whom he had attributed it, and the qualities with which it was inextricably blended in his fancy were hers; she was more like his ideal than the other, though he owned that the other was a charming girl too, and that in the thin treble of her voice lurked a potential fascination which might have made itself ascendently felt if he had happened to feel it first.

There was a dangerous instant in which he had a perverse question of changing his allegiance. This passed into another moment, almost as perilous, of confusion through a primal instinct of the man's by which he yields a double or a divided allegiance and simultaneously worships at two shrines; in still another breath he was aware that this was madness.

If he had been younger, he would have had no doubt as to his right in the circumstances. He had simply corresponded all winter with Miss Simpson; but though he had opened his heart freely and had invited her to the same confidence with him, he had not committed himself, and he had a right to drop the whole affair. She would have no right to complain; she had not committed herself either: they could both come off unscathed. But he was now thirty-five, and life had taught him something concerning the rights of others which he could not ignore. By seeking her confidence and by offering her his, he had given her a claim which was none the less binding because it was wholly tacit. There had been a time when he might have justified himself in dropping the affair; that was when she had failed to answer his letter; but he had come to see her in defiance of her silence, and now he could not withdraw, simply because he was disappointed, without cruelty, without atrocity.

This was what the girl's wistful eyes said to him; this was the reproach of her trembling lips; this was the accusation of her dejected figure, as she drooped in vision before him on the piano-stool and passed her hand soundlessly over the key-board. He tried to own to her that he was disappointed, but he could not get the words out of his throat; and now in her presence, as it were, he was not sure that he was disappointed.

X

HE woke late, with a longing to put his two senses of her to the proof of day; and as early in the forenoon as he could hope to see her, he walked out towards her aunt's house. It was a mild, dull morning, with a misted sunshine; in the little crimson tassels of the budded maples overhead the bees were droning.

The street was straight, and while he was yet a good way off he saw the gate open before the house, and a girl whom he recognized as Miss Bingham close it behind her. She then came down under the maples towards him, at first swiftly, and then more and more slowly, until finally she faltered to a stop. He quickened his own pace and came up to her with a "Good-morning" called to her and a lift of his hat. She returned neither salutation, and said, "I was coming to see you, Mr. Langbourne." Her voice was still a silver bell, but it was not gay, and her face was severely unsmiling.

"To see *me*?" he returned. "Has anything——"

"No, there's nothing the matter. But—I should like to talk with you." She held a little packet, tied with blue ribbon, in her intertwined hands, and she looked urgently at him.

"I shall be very glad," Langbourne began, but she interrupted,—

"Should you mind walking down to the Falls?"

He understood that for some reason she did not wish him to pass the house, and he bowed. "Wherever you like. I hope Mrs. Simpson is well? And Miss Simpson?"

"Oh, perfectly," said Miss Bingham, and they fenced with some questions and answers of no interest till they had walked back through the village to the Falls at the other end of it, where the saw in a mill was whirring through a long pine log, and the water, streaked with sawdust, was spreading over the rocks below and flowing away with a smooth swiftness. The ground near the mill was piled with fresh-sawed, fragrant lumber and strewn with logs.

Miss Bingham found a comfortable place on one of the logs, and began abruptly:

"You may think it's pretty strange, Mr. Langbourne, but I want to talk with you about Miss Simpson." She seemed to satisfy a duty to convention by saying Miss Simpson at the outset, and after that she called her friend Barbara. "I've brought you your letters to her," and she handed him the packet she had been holding. "Have you got hers with you?"

"They are at the hotel," answered Langbourne.

"Well, that's right, then. I thought perhaps you had brought them. You see," Miss Bingham continued, much more cold-bloodedly than Langbourne thought she need, "we talked it over last night, and it's

too silly. That's the way Barbara feels herself. The fact is," she went on confidingly, and with the air of saying something that he would appreciate, "I always thought it was some *young* man, and so did Barbara; or I don't believe she would ever have answered your first letter."

Langbourne knew that he was not a young man in a young girl's sense; but no man likes to have it said that he is old. Besides, Miss Bingham herself was not apparently in her first quarter of a century, and probably Miss Simpson would not see the earliest twenties again. He thought none the worse of her for that; but he felt that he was not so unequally matched in time with her that she need take the attitude with regard to him which Miss Bingham indicated. He was not the least gray nor the least bald, and his tall figure had kept its youthful lines.

Perhaps his face manifested something of his suppressed resentment. At any rate, Miss Bingham said apologetically, "I mean that if we had known it was a *serious* person we should have acted differently. I oughtn't to have let her thank you for those seedsman's catalogues; but I thought it couldn't do any harm. And then, after your letters began to come, we didn't know just when to stop them. To tell you the truth, Mr. Langbourne, we got so interested we couldn't *bear* to stop them. You wrote so much about your life in New York, that it was like a visit there every week; and it's pretty quiet at Upper Ashton in the winter time."

She seemed to refer this fact to Langbourne for sympathetic appreciation; he said mechanically, "Yes."

She resumed: "But when your picture came, I said it had *got* to stop; and so we just sent back my picture,—or I don't know but what Barbara did it without asking me,—and we did suppose that would be the last of it; when you wrote back saying you were coming here, we didn't believe you really would unless we said so. That's all there is about it; and if there is anybody to blame, I am the one. Barbara would never have done it in the world if I hadn't put her up to it."

In these words the implication that Miss Bingham had operated the whole affair finally unfolded itself. But distasteful as the fact was to Langbourne, and wounding as was the realization that he had been led on by this witness of his infatuation for the sake of the entertainment which his letters gave two girls in the dull winter of a mountain village, there was still greater pain, with an additional embarrassment in the regret which the words conveyed. It appeared that it was not he who had done the wrong; he had suffered it, and so far from having to offer reparation to a young girl for having unwarrantably wrought her up to expect of him a step from which he afterwards recoiled, he had the duty of forgiving her a trespass on his own invaded sensibilities. It was

humiliating to his vanity; it inflicted a hurt to something better than his vanity. He began very uncomfortably: "It's all right, as far as I'm concerned. I had no business to address Miss Simpson in the first place—"

"Well," Miss Bingham interrupted, "that's what I told Barbara; but she got to feeling badly about it; she thought if you had taken the trouble to send back the circular that she dropped in the hotel, she couldn't do less than acknowledge it, and she kept on so about it that I had to let her. But that was the first false step."

These words, while they showed Miss Simpson in a more amiable light, did not enable Langbourne to see Miss Bingham's merit so clearly. In the methodical and consecutive working of his emotions, he was aware that it was no longer a question of divided allegiance, and that there could never be any such question again. He perceived that Miss Bingham had not such a good figure as he had fancied the night before, and that her eyes were set rather too near together. While he dropped his own eyes, and stood trying to think what he should say in answer to her last speech, her high, sweet voice tinkled out in gay challenge, "How do, John?"

He looked up and saw a square-set, brown-faced young man advancing towards them in his shirt-sleeves; he came deliberately, finding his way in and out among the logs, till he stood smiling down, through a heavy mustache and thick black lashes, into the face of the girl, as if she were some sort of joke. The sun struck into her face as she looked up at him, and made her frown with a knot between her brows that pulled her eyes still closer together, and she asked, with no direct reference to his shirt-sleeves,— "A'n't you forcing the season?"

"Don't want to let the summer get the start of you," the young man generalized, and Miss Bingham said,—

"Mr. Langbourne, Mr. Dickery." The young man silently shook hands with Langbourne, whom he took into the joke of Miss Bingham with another smile; and she went on: "Say, John, I wish you'd tell Jenny I don't see why we shouldn't go this afternoon, after all."

"All right," said the young man.

"I suppose you're coming too?" she suggested.

"Hadn't heard of it," he returned.

"Well, you have now. You've got to be ready at two o'clock."

"That so?" the young fellow inquired. Then he walked away among the logs, as casually as he had arrived, and Miss Bingham rose and shook some bits of bark from her skirt.

"Mr. Dickery is the owner of the mills," she explained, and she explored Langbourne's face for an intelligence which she did not seem to find there. He thought, indifferently enough, that this young man had heard the two girls speak of him, and had satisfied a natural

curiosity in coming to look him over; it did not occur to him that he had any especial relation to Miss Bingham.

She walked up into the village with Langbourne, and he did not know whether he was to accompany her home or not. But she gave him no sign of dismissal till she put her hand upon her gate to pull it open without asking him to come in. Then he said, "I will send Miss Simpson's letters to her at once."

"Oh, any time will do, Mr. Langbourne," she returned sweetly. Then, as if it had just occurred to her, she added, "We're going after May flowers this afternoon. Wouldn't you like to come too?"

"I don't know," he began, "whether I shall have the time——"

"Why, you're not going away to-day!"

"I expected—I—— But if you don't think I shall be intruding——"

"Why, I should be delighted to have you. Mr. Dickery's going, and Jenny Dickery, and Barbara. I don't *believe* it will rain."

"Then, if I may," said Langbourne.

"Why, certainly, Mr. Langbourne!" she cried, and he started away. But he had gone only a few rods when he wheeled about and hurried back. The girl was going up the walk to the house, looking over her shoulder after him; at his hurried return she stopped and came down to the gate again.

"Miss Bingham, I think—I think I had better not go."

"Why, just as you feel about it, Mr. Langbourne," she assented.

"I will bring the letters this evening, if you will let me—if Miss Simpson—if you will be at home."

"We shall be very happy to see you, Mr. Langbourne," said the girl formally, and then he went back to his hotel.

XI.

LANGBOURNE could not have told just why he had withdrawn his acceptance of Miss Bingham's invitation. If at the moment it was the effect of a quite reasonless panic, he decided later that it was because he wished to think. It could not be said, however, that he did think, unless thinking consists of a series of dramatic representations which the mind makes to itself from a given impulse, and which it is quite powerless to end. All the afternoon, which Langbourne spent in his room, his mind was the theatre of scenes with Miss Simpson, in which he perpetually evolved the motives governing him from the beginning, and triumphed out of his difficulties and embarrassments. Her voice as it acquiesced in all no longer related itself to that imaginary personality which had inhabited his fancy. That was gone irrevocably; and the voice belonged to the likeness of Barbara, and no other; from her

similitude, little, quaint, with her hair of cloudy red and her large, dim-sighted eyes, it played upon the spiritual sense within him with the coaxing, drolling, mocking charm which he had felt from the first. It blessed him with intelligent and joyous forgiveness. But as he stood at her gate that evening this unmerited felicity fell from him. He now really heard her voice, through the open door-way, but perhaps because it was mixed with other voices—the treble of Miss Bingham, and the bass of a man who must be the Mr. Dickery he had seen at the saw mills—he turned and hurried back to his hotel, where he wrote a short letter saying that he had decided to take the express for New York that night. With an instinctive recognition of her authority in the affair, or with a cowardly shrinking from direct dealing with Barbara, he wrote to Juliet Bingham, and he addressed to her the packet of letters which he sent for Barbara. Superficially, he had done what he had no choice but to do. He had been asked to return her letters, and he had returned them, and brought the affair to an end.

In his long ride to the city he assured himself in vain that he was doing right if he was not sure of his feeling towards the girl. It was quite because he was not sure of his feeling that he could not be sure he was not acting falsely and cruelly.

The fear grew upon him through the summer, which he spent in the heat and stress of the town. In his work he could forget a little the despair in which he lived; but in a double consciousness like that of the hypochondriac, the girl whom it seemed to him he had deserted was visibly and audibly present with him. Her voice was always in his inner ear, and it visualized her looks and movements to his inner eye.

Now he saw and understood at last that what his heart had more than once misgiven him might be the truth, and that though she had sent back his letters, and asked her own in return, it was not necessarily her wish that he should obey her request. It might very well have been an experiment of his feeling towards her, a mute quest of the impression she had made upon him, a test of his will and purpose, an overture to a clearer and truer understanding between them. This misgiving became a conviction from which he could not escape.

He believed too late that he had made a mistake, that he had thrown away the supreme chance of his life. But was it too late? When he could bear it no longer, he began to deny that it was too late. He denied it even to the pathetic presence which haunted him, and in which the magic of her voice itself was merged at last, so that he saw her more than he heard her. He overbore her weak will with his stronger will, and set himself strenuously to protest to her real presence what he now always said to her phantom. When his partner came back from his vacation, Langbourne told him that he was going to take a day or two off.

XII.

HE arrived at Upper Ashton Falls long enough before the early autumnal dusk to note that the crimson buds of the maples were now their crimson leaves, but he kept as close to the past as he could by not going to find Barbara before the hour of the evening when he had turned from her gate without daring to see her. It was a soft October evening now, as it was a soft May evening then; and there was a mystical hint of unity in the like feel of the dull, mild air. Again voices were coming out of the open doors and windows of the house, and they were the same voices that he had last heard there.

He knocked, and after a moment of startled hush within Juliet Bingham came to the door. "Why, Mr. Langbourne!" she screamed.

"I—I should like to come in, if you will let me," he gasped out.

"Why, certainly, Mr. Langbourne," she returned.

He had not dwelt so long and so intently on the meeting at hand without considering how he should account for his coming, and he had formulated a confession of his motives. But he had never meant to make it to Juliet Bingham, and he now found himself unable to allege a word in explanation of his presence. He followed her into the parlor. Barbara silently gave him her hand and then remained passive in the background, where Dickery held aloof, smiling in what seemed his perpetual enjoyment of the Juliet Bingham joke. She at once put herself in authority over the situation; she made Langbourne let her have his hat; she seated him when and where she chose; she removed and put back the lampshades; she pulled up and pulled down the window-blinds; she shut the outer door because of the night air, and opened it because of the unseasonable warmth within. She excused Mrs. Simpson's absence on account of a headache, and asked him if he would not have a fan; when he refused it she made him take it, and while he sat helplessly dangling it from his hand, she asked him about the summer he had had, and whether he had passed it in New York. She was very intelligent about the heat in New York, and tactful in keeping the one-sided talk from falling. Barbara said nothing after a few faint attempts to take part in it, and Langbourne made briefer and briefer answers. His reticence seemed only to heighten Juliet Bingham's satisfaction, and she said, with a final supremacy, that she had been intending to go out with Mr. Dickery to a business meeting of the book-club, but they would be back before Langbourne could get away; she made him promise to wait for them. He did not know if Barbara looked any protest,—at least she spoke none,—and Juliet went out with Dickery. She turned at the door to bid Barbara say, if any one called, that she was at the book-club meeting. Then she disappeared, but reappeared and called, "See here, a minute, Bab!" and at the outer threshold she

detained Barbara in vivid whisper, ending aloud, "Now you be sure to do both, Bab! Aunt Elmira will tell you where the things are." Again she vanished, and was gone long enough to have reached the gate and come back from it. She was renewing all her whispered and out-spoken charges when Dickery showed himself at her side, put his hand under her elbow, and wheeled her about, and while she called gayly over her shoulder to the others, "Did you ever?" walked her definitively out of the house.

Langbourne did not suffer the silence which followed her going to possess him. What he had to do he must do quickly, and he said, "Miss Simpson, may I ask you one question?"

"Why, if you won't expect me to answer it," she suggested quaintly.

"You must do as you please about that. It has to come before I try to excuse myself for being here; it's the only excuse I can offer. It's this: Did you send Miss Bingham to get back your letters from me last spring?"

"Why, of course!"

"I mean, was it your idea?"

"We thought it would be better."

The evasion satisfied Langbourne, but he asked, "Had I given you some cause to distrust me at that time?"

"Oh, no," she protested. "We got to talking it over, and—and we thought we had better."

"Because I had come here without being asked?"

"No, no; it wasn't that."

"I know I oughtn't to have come. I know I oughtn't to have written to you in the beginning, but you had let me write, and I thought you would let me come. I tried always to be sincere with you; to make you feel that you could trust me. I believe that I am an honest man; I thought I was a better man for having known you through your letters. I couldn't tell you how much they had been to me. You seemed to think, because I lived in a large place, that I had a great many friends; but I have very few; I might say I hadn't any—such as I thought I had when I was writing to you. Most of the men I know belong to some sort of clubs; but I don't. I went to New York when I was feeling alone in the world,—it was from something that had happened to me partly through my own fault,—and I've never got over being alone there. I've never gone into society; I don't know what society is, and I suppose that's why I am acting differently from a society man now. The only change I ever had from business was reading at night: I've got a pretty good library. After I began to get your letters, I went out more—to the theatre, and lectures, and concerts, and all sorts of things—so that I could have something interesting to write about; I thought you'd get tired of always hearing about me. And your letters filled up

my life, so that I didn't seem alone any more. I read them all hundreds of times; I should have said that I knew them by heart, if they had not been as fresh at last as they were at first. I seemed to hear you talking in them." He stopped as if withholding himself from what he had nearly said without intending, and resumed: "It's some comfort to know that you didn't want them back because you doubted me, or my good faith."

"Oh, no, indeed, Mr. Langbourne," said Barbara compassionately.

"Then why did you?"

"I don't know. We—"

"No; not 'we.' You?"

She did not answer for so long that he believed she resented his speaking so peremptorily and was not going to answer him at all. At last she said, "I thought you would rather give them back." She turned and looked at him, with the eyes which he knew saw his face dimly, but saw his thought clearly.

"What made you think that?"

"Oh, I don't know. Didn't you want to?"

He knew that the fact which their words veiled was now the first thing in their mutual consciousness. He spoke the truth in saying, "No, I never wanted to," but this was only a mechanical truth, and he knew it. He had an impulse to put the burden of the situation on her, and press her to say why she thought he wished to do so; but his next emotion was shame for this impulse. A thousand times, in these reveries in which he had imagined meeting her, he had told her first of all how he had overheard her talking in the room next his own in the hotel, and of the power her voice had instantly and lastingly had upon him. But now, with a sense spiritualized by her presence, he perceived that this, if it was not unworthy, was secondary, and that the right to say it was not yet established. There was something that must come before this,—something that could alone justify him in any further step. If she could answer him first as he wished, then he might open his whole heart to her, at whatever cost; he was not greatly to blame, if he did not realize that the cost could not be wholly his, as he asked, remotely enough from her question, "After I wrote that I was coming up here, and you did not answer me, did you think I was coming?"

She did not answer, and he felt that he had been seeking a mean advantage. He went on: "If you didn't expect it, if you never thought that I was coming, there's no need for me to tell you anything else."

Her face turned towards him a very little, but not so much as even to get a sidelong glimpse of him; it was as if it were drawn by a magnetic attraction; and she said, "I didn't know but you would come."

"Then I will tell you why I came—the only thing that gave me the

right to come against your will, if it *was* against it. I came to ask you to marry me. Will you?"

She now turned and looked fully at him, though he was aware of being a mere blur in her near-sighted vision.

"Do you mean to ask it now?"

"Yes."

"And have you wished to ask it ever since you first saw me?"

He tried to say that he had, but he could not; he could only say, "I wish to ask it now more than ever."

She shook her head slowly. "I'm not sure how you want me to answer you."

"Not sure?"

"No. I'm afraid I might disappoint you again."

He could not make out whether she was laughing at him. He sat, not knowing what to say, and he blurted out, "Do you mean that you won't?"

"I shouldn't want you to make another mistake."

"I don't know what you"—he was going to say "mean," but he substituted—"wish. If you wish for more time, I can wait as long as you choose."

"No, I might wish for time, if there was anything more. But if there's nothing else you have to tell me—then, no, I cannot marry you."

Langbourne rose, feeling justly punished, somehow, but bewildered as much as humbled, and stood stupidly, unable to go. "I don't know what you could expect me to say after you've refused me—"

"Oh, I don't expect anything."

"But there *is* something I should like to tell you. I know that I behaved that night as if—as if I hadn't come to ask you—what I have; I don't blame you for not trusting me now. But it is no use to tell you what I intended if it is all over."

He looked down into his hat, and she said in a low voice, "I think I ought to know. Won't you—sit down?"

He sat down again. "Then I will tell you at the risk of— But there's nothing left to lose! You know how it is, when we think about a person or a place before we've seen them: we make some sort of picture of them, and expect them to be like it. I don't know how to say it; you do look more like what I thought than you did at first. I suppose I must seem a fool to say it; but I thought you were tall, and that you were—well!—rather masterful—"

"Like Juliet Bingham?" she suggested, with a gleam in the eye next him.

"Yes, like Juliet Bingham. It was your voice made me think—it was your voice that first made me want to see you, that made me write to you, in the beginning. I heard you talking that night in the hotel,

where you left that circular; you were in the room next to mine; and I wanted to come right up here then; but I had to go back to New York, and so I wrote to you. When your letters came, I always seemed to hear you speaking in them."

"And when you saw me you were disappointed. I knew it."

"No; not disappointed—"

"Why not? My voice didn't go with my looks; it belonged to a tall, strong-willed girl."

"No," he protested. "As soon as I got away it was just as it always had been. I mean that your voice and your looks went together again."

"As soon as you got away!"

"I mean— What do you care for it, anyway!" he cried, in self-scornful exasperation.

"I know," she said thoughtfully, "that my voice isn't like me; I'm not good enough for it. It ought to be Juliet Bingham's—"

"No, no!" he interrupted, with a sort of disgust that seemed not to displease her, "I can't imagine it!"

"But we can't any of us have everything, and she's got enough as it is. She's a head higher than I am, and she wants to have her way ten times as bad."

"I didn't mean that," Langbourne began. "I—but you must think me enough of a simpleton already."

"Oh, no, not near," she declared. "I'm a good deal of a simpleton myself at times."

"It doesn't matter," he said desperately; "I love you."

"Ah, that belongs to the time when you thought I looked differently."

"I don't want you to look differently. I—"

"You can't expect me to believe that now. It will take time for me to do that."

"I will give you time," he said, so simply that she smiled.

"If it was my voice you cared for I should have to come up to it, somehow, before you cared for me. I'm not certain that I ever could. And if I couldn't? You see, don't you?"

"I see that I was a fool to tell you what I have," he so far asserted himself. "But I thought I ought to be honest."

"Oh, you've been *honest*!" she said.

"You have a right to think that I am a flighty, romantic person," he resumed, "and I don't blame you. But if I could explain, it has been a very real experience to me. It was your nature that I cared for in your voice. I can't tell you just how it was; it seemed to me that unless I could hear it again, and always, my life would not be worth much. This was something deeper and better than I could make you

understand. It wasn't merely a fancy; I do not want you to believe that."

"I don't know whether fancies are such very bad things. I've had some of my own," said Barbara.

He sat still with his hat between his hands, as if he could not find a chance of dismissing himself, and she remained looking down at her skirt where it tented itself over the toe of her shoe. The tall clock in the hall ticked second after second. It counted thirty of them at least before he spoke, after a preliminary noise in his throat.

"There is one thing I should like to ask: If you had cared for me, would you have been offended at my having thought you looked differently?"

She took time to consider this. "I might have been vexed, or hurt, I suppose, but I don't see how I could really have been offended."

"Then I understand," he began, in one of his inductive emotions; but she rose nervously, as if she could not sit still, and went to the piano. The Spanish song he had given her was lying open on it, and she struck some of the chords absently.

"Miss Simpson," he said, coming stiffly forward, "I should like to hear you sing that song once more before I—— Won't you sing it?"

"Why, yes," she said, and she slipped laterally into the piano-seat.

At the end of the first stanza he gave a long sigh, and then he was silent to the close.

As she sounded the last notes of the accompaniment Juliet Bingham burst into the room with somehow the effect to Langbourne of having lain in wait outside for that moment.

"Oh, I just *knew* it!" she shouted, running upon them. "I bet John anything! Oh, I'm so happy it's come out all right; and now I'm going to have the first——"

She lifted her arms as if to put them round his neck; he stood dazed, and Barbara rose from the piano-stool with nothing less than horror in her face.

Juliet Bingham began again, "Why, haven't you——"

"No!" cried Barbara. "I forgot all about what you said! I just happened to sing it because he asked me," and she ran from the room.

"Well, if I ever!" said Juliet Bingham, following her with astonished eyes. Then she turned to Langbourne. "It's perfectly ridiculous, and I don't see how I can ever explain it. I don't think Barbara has shown a great deal of tact," and Juliet Bingham was evidently prepared to make up the defect by a diplomacy which she enjoyed. "I don't know where to begin exactly; but you must certainly excuse my—— manner, when I came in."

"Oh, certainly," said Langbourne in polite mystification.

"It was all through a misunderstanding that I don't think I was to

blame for, to say the least; but I can't explain it without making Barbara appear—— Mr. Langbourne, *will* you tell whether you are engaged?"

"No! Miss Simpson has declined my offer."

"Oh, then it's all right," said Juliet Bingham, but Langbourne looked as if he did not see why she should say that. "Then I can understand; I see the whole thing now; and I didn't want to make *another* mistake. Ah—won't you—sit down?"

"Thank you. I believe I will go."

"But you have a right to know——"

"Would my knowing alter the main fact?"

"Well, no, I can't say it would," Juliet Bingham replied with an air of candor. "And, as you *say*, perhaps it's just as well," she added with an air of relief.

Langbourne had not said it, but he acquiesced with a faint sigh, and absently took the hand of farewell which Juliet Bingham gave him. "I know Barbara will be sorry not to see you; but I guess it's better."

In spite of the supremacy which the turn of affairs had given her, Juliet Bingham looked far from satisfied, and she let Langbourne go with a sense of inconclusiveness which showed in the parting inclination towards him, which she kept after he turned from her.

He crept light-headed down the brick walk with a feeling that the darkness was not half thick enough, though it was so thick that it hid from him the figure that leaned upon the gate and held it shut, as if forcibly to interrupt his going.

"Mr. Langbourne," said the voice of this figure, which though so unnaturally strained he knew for Barbara's voice, "you have got to *know!* I'm ashamed to tell you, but I should be more ashamed not to, after what's happened. Juliet made me promise when she went out to the book-club meeting that if I—if you—if it turned out as *you* wanted, I would sing that song as a sign—— It was just a joke—like my sending her picture. It was my mistake and I am sorry, and I beg your pardon—I——"

She stopped with a quick catch in her breath, and the darkness round them seemed to become luminous with the light of hope that broke upon him within.

"But if there really was no mistake," he began. He could not get further.

She did not answer, and for the first time her silence was sweeter than her voice. He lifted her tip-toe in his embrace, but he did not wish her taller; her yielding spirit lost itself in his own, and he did not regret the strong will which he had once imagined hers.

THE RETURN OF WILLIAM PENN

DECEMBER, 1699

BY WILLIAM PERRINE (PENN)

“**A**ND thou, Philadelphia, the virgin settlement of this province, named before thou wert born, what love, what care, what service, and what travail has there been to bring thee forth and preserve thee from such as would abuse and defile thee?” It was in this spirit of anxious affection that William Penn had left the little town of caves and cabins which he had brought into being when he first landed on the shores of the Delaware. But when he came to Philadelphia for the second time, exactly two hundred years ago, it was not so much as a founder as a reformer. The city which he had planned seventeen years before (in 1682) had passed through a period of prosperity and growth which travellers looked upon with wonder. Taxes were light, trade active, the cost of living cheap, and the laws easy, while the ten thousand people in Philadelphia and its vicinity were for the most part substantially and comfortably housed. Yet nowhere else in the colonies was there more disposition than in the infant city to find fault and to criticise the rulers. “For the love of God,” he was once moved to exclaim to the grumblers, “don’t be so governmentish, so noisy and open in your dissatisfaction.”

Profanity, horse-racing, drunkenness, debauchery, negro turbulence on the Sabbath, official favoritism, and the connivance of public officers with illicit trade were matters of frequent complaint. Time and again, too, it was rumored that Captain Kidd and other pirates were sailing off the capes of the Delaware, and that the government was too weak to suppress the ferocious buccaneers. Tipsy and scolding housewives, numerous drinking-houses, men masquerading in women’s clothes or women in men’s clothes, an attempt to fight a duel with swords, and a husband with two wives were some of the examples of depravity which excited indignation among the friends of law and order.

When Penn arrived in the first week of December, 1699, after a three months’ voyage in the Canterbury, he found that the pestilence which was destined for more than a century to decimate the city, in many visitations, had just swept through its population. It had come from Barbadoes, had carried off more than two hundred victims, and had left some mark of sorrow in almost every household.

Penn at this time was fifty-five years of age. He united in a marked degree the simple and amiable piety of the Quaker to the manners and accomplishments of a man of the world. His fine scholarship, his skill as a writer, his fluency as a speaker, his serenity of temper, his thoughtful courtesy, his broad-minded benevolence, his sense of justice, and his

purity in private life, stamped him plainly as a man of superior breed. Physically strong, tall, well made, with fine dark eyes and a face in which the traces of his handsome youth had not yet been obliterated by portliness and advancing years, still so nimble and athletic that he would jump and run in the sports of his Indian friends, and still so cheerful that he would join them in their dancing "canticoes," a lover of fast horses, a sprightly and often facetious talker, and fond of good company—he was one of the most gracious and attractive members of the sect whose cause he had long championed with heroic zeal. One day, when he was riding on horseback to Haverford, where he was wont to preach, he overtook a little girl from Darby who was going on foot to the same destination, and good-naturedly allowed her to mount the horse's back and ride behind him. But in the privacy of his chamber this pleasant gentleman was the humblest of Christians. Thus, on another occasion, when he was lodging at a place in Gwynned, a boy in the household was anxious to see the great man. He crept up to the room to which Penn had retired, peeped through the latchet hole, and there beheld him on his knees in prayer and in thanksgiving for his refuge in the wilderness. It was this manly charm of manner and this pious simplicity, in addition to his philanthropic spirit, which caused the excellent Isaac Norris to exclaim admiringly of him that "the Governor is our *Pater Patriæ*."

Wherever Penn turned he saw new houses and new faces. It was observed, too, that all the children who in the interval had been born in the city, the Dutch and the Swedes as well as the English, were robust, well favored, and usually without a blemish. The mothers were young women; most of them had been married before they were twenty years old, and so rare were old maids that the wages for female help were high. Here and there were masters who had not only negro but Indian slaves, and at his manor house Penn himself was a slave-owner, although in later years he gave his bondsmen their freedom. The Indians of the Lenni Lenape tribe would go about the streets and alleys at night, bawling as lustily as the sailors who came ashore and wandered around among the pot-houses near Dock Creek in search of liquor and cheer.

No Indian, however, was so much held in dread as the corsairs who infested Delaware Bay. Penn saw that it would be necessary to employ vigorous measures to break up the gangs of pirates, who, it was charged, had little to fear of the authorities in disposing of their plunder. Such noted members of the profession in song and story as Avery, Thompson, Kidd, and Blackbeard were in the habit of making their rendezvous on the Delaware or the New Jersey coast. It was said that the vessel of a pirate had been harbored for a winter in Cohocksink Creek, and tradition has handed down a memory that Blackbeard and

his crew once visited Marcus Hook and revelled at the house of a Swedish woman. More than this, it came to be affirmed that this great buccaneer had actually been seen in a tavern on High Street enjoying his tipple with his sword by his side.

No one thought of scandal in the fact that the Legislature held its session in a tavern, or that the Baptists were willing to worship in a brew-house. When Penn spoke at the "Great Meeting-House," at Second and High Streets, he could hardly throw a stone without hitting some inn or tavern like the Crooked Billet. It was near this meeting-house that the great town bell, swinging from a tall mast, called the people together to listen to the town-crier make proclamation or read ordinances. But the most conspicuous edifice of a public character that could be seen in or near the city was the church which the Swedes had just erected at Wicaco and which Charles XI. of Sweden had supplied with three missionaries and an outfit of books. The most notable private structure was Clarke Hall, at the southwest corner of Third and Chestnut Streets, with its many rooms and its spacious gardens.

And yet within a five minutes' walk from any side of Clarke Hall the lovers of hunting and fishing could find abundant sport. Both the Delaware and the Schuylkill swarmed with fish. It was a common sight at the Blue Anchor Tavern to look out over the river and see sturgeon leaping up into the air by dozens. Into the Schuylkill and far beyond the domain of the Welsh swam myriads of shad. The meadows were covered with great flocks of geese; wild swans whitened the surface of the streams they floated upon, and the air was often dense with the pigeons that flew over the city.

The greater part of the populated area of the city lay north of Dock Creek up to and beyond High Street. Across Dock Creek there was a ferry for passengers to the southern part of the city, landing them at the foot of Society Hill. The tide of the creek flowed as far as Fourth and High Streets, and the Bourse now overlooks where was then the "great wild duck pond." Penn thought that the inlet could be made a fine winter harbor; small vessels came up easily as high as the line of Third Street, and on that branch of the creek which diverged to the southeast a batteau or a canoe could be paddled where now stands the Church of St. Peter's. To Londoners there was a suggestiveness of parts of the English capital in the lanes and alleys north of Dock Street—Morris Lane, Shorter's Alley, Sikes's Alley, Jones's Lane, King Street (now Water Street), and Turner Lane. Broad Street had even then received its name on the city plan, although no man could venture to live at that distance without fear of a raid of wolves on his flocks. But probably nothing gratified the eye of Penn more than to behold a meeting-house out at the square which he had

planned for the centre of his "greene country town," and on which he looked as the site of the future buildings of his city for "public affairs." He was charmed with the Schuylkill; and on the hill which already he had called "Fairmount" he contemplated making a home.

Along the line of an old Indian trail was the way to a prosperous little settlement which had recently attracted the eye of one Frame, a poetic chronicler:

"The German Town, of which I spoke before,
Which is at least in length one mile or more,
Where lives High German people and Low Dutch,
Whose trade in weaving cloth is much."

To them Penn could talk with as much ease as he could to his French vigners at Fairmount. The great wave of immigration from the Palatinate had not yet begun to flow into Pennsylvania, and the scholars and artisans at Germantown, with their quaint houses, built in a long row, along the main road, were the first German community that had taken root. In the forests near the Wissahickon stood a little paper mill which William Rittenhouse had just built. But in proximity to this infant manufacture were to be found the most remarkable examples of spirituality among Penn's subjects. These were the mystic hermits like Kelpius, Seelig, Matthias, and their followers, who lived with their books in caves, who had renounced all worldly pleasures, and who gave themselves up to the joys of piety in their woodland exile and called themselves the "Society of the Woman of the Wilderness." Among the sects that Penn found in Philadelphia in addition to his own—the Swedish Lutherans, the Episcopalians in the first parish of Christ Church, and the humble Baptists and Presbyterians in the Barbadoes house—there were no votaries of religion so curious in their monastic exaltation as these sojourners in the solitude.

Twenty miles north of the city, or above the present town of Bristol, Penn had set aside for himself an estate long known as Pennsbury. There he lived in the summer with as much comfort and elegance as it was possible to maintain in America at that time in supporting the character of a country gentleman. The brick manor house which he caused to be built on an elevation overlooking the Delaware was planned by him with the thought that he would pass there his hours of leisure during the rest of his life. It was a spacious, stately structure, surrounded by a lawn and gardens, furnished with the appointments of a luxurious home, and maintained with a steward and gardeners and a staff of servants. His cellars were stocked with wines and other liquors; his own special brew-house was part of the appurtenances of the estate; his table was bountifully supplied, and his stables, which were built for twelve horses, contained some of the best-

blooded stock of England. Conspicuous among his horses was "Tamerlane," a thoroughbred stallion, and descendant of the great English racer, Godolphin. The expenditure which he made upon his country-seat was equivalent to not less than twenty-five thousand dollars in the money of our time. Nor was he less liberal in his hospitality. He thought nothing of serving up a hundred turkeys in a great feast under the shade-trees for his Indian friends. His home was constantly open to visitors, his receptions and entertainments were numerous, and there was seldom a day in fine weather when there might not be found in its wide hall or on the pebble walks an Indian chief, or Quaker preacher, or a Philadelphia politician waiting for an audience with the open-handed lord of the manor.

When Penn visited the city he was usually rowed down the Delaware from his boat-house and landing in an eight-oared barge. He had also a sedan chair, a calash, and a coach-and-four for the use of his family. He made journeys to New York, to Maryland, and as far west as the Susquehanna River.

When he arrived in the city in 1699 he does not seem to have gone to the house which he occupied at the time of his first visit—the little "Letitia" House. In company with the wise and faithful James Logan, then a young Irish scholar who had just entered his service as a secretary, he was lodged for a month in the home of Edward Shippen, on Second Street, above Spruce. But a month later Penn, with his wife and daughter, took up his abode in the "Slate Roof House" on the same street, between Walnut and Chestnut. His first wife, Gulielma Springett, had died about six years before, and in the interval he had been an ardent wooer of Hannah Callowhill, to whose heart he had laid siege in a campaign of no little epistolary warmth. They had been married for three years and had brought out with them Letitia, the daughter of the first marriage, then twenty-six years old and a spirited and probably showy girl, and often referred to by her father as "Tish." Mrs. Penn had been in the Slate Roof House less than a month when she gave birth to a son. Of the fourteen children of whom Penn was father—seven by each of his wives—this was the only one born on this side of the Atlantic, and hence it was that he came to be known as "John the American." It was said that he was a comely babe, with his father's "grace and air," and one of the traditions of Pennsbury tells how in the next summer was seen "the delicate and pretty mother sitting by the side of the cradle of her infant." She did not care, however, to live in the colony; nor did her step-daughter; and the fact that William Penn did not become a permanent resident of Philadelphia was due largely to their importunities to him to return to England, notwithstanding his wish that they would stay.

There was another member of his family who was then beginning to be one of the sorrows of his father's life. William Penn, Jr., a brother of the favorite "Tish," had been left in England. At the age of twenty he had become a man about town, fond of gay company, and forming the tastes of a vivacious profligate with an indulgent father. All the hopes which Penn had built upon this son were doomed to bitter disappointment. When, later, he caused him to be sent to Philadelphia with the faith that the prudent Logan would be equal to the task of improving his manners and morals, the young man scandalized the town with his roysterling antics. One night at a tavern in Coombs's Alley such politicians and office-holders as Governor Evans and one Finney, the Sheriff of Philadelphia, together with the young heir, fell into a row, while drinking, on the merits of a militia system. They proceeded to beat a constable and a watchman for differing with them; a general fight followed; and the Mayor and an alderman endeavored to suppress it, while Penn shouted for a pistol. Subsequently, he was indicted by the Grand Jury, and he then revenged himself on Philadelphia by declaring that he was no longer a Quaker!

In the autumn of 1701 Penn found himself, largely through his concern for this ungracious son, obliged to go back to England. "My heart is among you," he said to his fellow-Philadelphians when he saw that he must go, "whatever some people may be pleased to think; and no unkindness or disappointment shall (with submission to God's providence) ever be able to alter my love to the country and resolution to return and settle in it." It was then that he gave Philadelphia a charter which was the foundation of her incorporated rights and in which his friend, Edward Shippen, a Quaker who had come from Boston, was named as the first Mayor of the city. Nor was it without sadness that Penn made his preparations to return. As yet there were no premonitions of the malady which a few years later was to smite him with paralysis and finally send him to his grave with his once-luminous intellect as weak and wandering as a little child's. But he was vexed and harassed with importunates up to the very hour of his sailing. He solemnly and, indeed, pathetically affirmed that his visit had yielded him no pecuniary profit, and that he was actually twenty thousand pounds out of purse for what he had done for Pennsylvania. In that mellow English which Jeffries in the *Edinburgh Review* more than a hundred years afterwards said of one of Penn's letters was more melodious to his ears than the epigrams and apothegms of modern times, he exhorted his friends to peace and Logan to the duties of trust and stewardship. With his family, he took passage in the ship *Dalmahoy*. The little city faded away from his view forever as the ship sailed slowly down the river past the Schuylkill and the farms, stockades,

and little forts where the Swedes had made their homes. At Newcastle the Dalmahoy lay for a time in the stream. On board of the vessel almost the last word that came from him was addressed to Logan; and it was like the generous, hearty gentleman that he was, even in the shadows of the troubles which were soon to bear him down. "Give," he said to the honest secretary, "a small treat in my name to the gentlemen of Philadelphia for a beginning to a better understanding."

Two centuries have passed away. The noble Founder sleeps in the humble graveyard of Jordan's across the sea. Over the great city which in its infancy he nursed and loved stands a mighty figure visible daily to the million that look up to it with filial veneration. And in the pleasure ground of the people may still be found the quaint house in which he first ruled the virgin city of his hopes and dreams. The past and the present—the Philadelphia of 1699 and the Philadelphia of 1899—meet in the chord of memory that stretches from the little old Letitia house to the colossus which, raised as high as human hands have ever built, commemorates the work and worth of William Penn.

THE PERFUME OF THE ROSE

BY FLORA ANNIE STEEL

Author of "On the Face of the Waters," etc.

"I THINK we ought to be going back to the others," said the girl. She was a pretty, fair, English girl, fresh as a rose in her dainty pink muslin dress, flounced as they wore them in the Mutiny year—in three full flounces to the waist, like the corolla of a flower. And the lace sunshade she held tilted over her shoulder, as a protection against the slanting rays of the afternoon sun, added to her rose-likeness by its calyx of pale green lining.

"Ought we?" said the young Englishman who walked beside her, his hand clasping hers. They were a good-looking pair; pleasant to behold. "What a bore! It is so jolly here."

The epithet was not happy, save as an expression of the speaker's frame of mind. For the garden into which these engaged lovers had wandered away from the gay party of English men and women who had taken possession of the marble summer-house in its centre for a picnic (or, as the natives call it, "a fools' dinner") was something more than jolly.

It was beautiful, this garden of a dead dynasty, of kings past and gone like last year's roses.

But there were roses still, and to spare, within those high four-square walls that were hidden from each other by the burnished orange-groves, by the tall forest trees fringing the cross of wide marble aqueducts bordered by wide paths.

Such blossoming trees! The *kachnar* flinging its bare branches, set thick with its geranium flowers, against the creamy feathers waving among the dense, dark foliage of the mangoes. The *bakayun* drooping its long lilac tassels beside the great gold ones of the *umultâs*. And here and there, its whole vitality lavished on a monstrous leaf or two, a huge flower or two, white, curved, solid as if cut in cold marble, yet with a warm fragrance at its heart, a hill magnolia challenged the scent of the roses below.

Ineffectually. At least, here, in this square of the garden; for that cross of wide, empty aqueducts divided it into squares.

And this one was a square of roses: roses everywhere, even in the lower level of what, in the old kingly days, had been a marble-edged water-way, which now, half filled with soil, held more roses.

But they were all of one kind, the pink Persian rose, whose outer petals pale in the sunlight, whose rose-of-roses' heart is full of an almost piercing perfume. What wonder, when it is the otto-of-roses rose! It grew here for that set purpose in orderly lines, its gray-green velvety leaves almost hidden by its profusion of flowers.

And the scent of them filled the whole square of garden, where the air, still warm from the past noon, lay imprisoned in that fringe of blossoming trees.

It seemed to fill the brain also with the quintessence of gladness, beauty, life, and love.

So his arm sought her waist and their lips met.

But only for a second; the next, her blush matching her flounces, she had drawn back, and he, with an angry frown, was glaring in the direction of the notes which had interrupted them.

It was a high, clear voice, full of little trills and bubblings like a bird's, and it sang on insistently, as if to give those two time to recover from their confusion. And as it sang, the Persian vowels seemed as piercingly sweet as the perfume into which they echoed:

"The rose-root takes earth's kisses for its meat;
The rose-leaf makes its blush from the sun's heat;
The rose-scent wakes—who knows from what thing sweet?
Who knows
The secret of the perfume of the rose?"

As the song ended a head showed above the tufted bushes. It was rather a fine head, bare of covering, its long, grizzled hair, parted in the middle, lying in a smooth outward curve, then sweeping in an equal

inside curve between the ear and throat. So much, no more, was to be seen above the roses, save, for a moment, a long-fingered, delicate brown hand hiding the face in its salaam.

"Who the *shaitan* are you?" asked the young man fiercely in Hindustani.

The head and hands met in a second salaam, then the face showed—rather a fine face, preternaturally grave, but with a cunning comprehension in its gravity.

"I am Hushmut the essence-maker, Huzoor," was the reply. "I belong to the garden, and, being hidden from the noble people in my occupation of plucking roses for my still, I sang, to let them know."

The young Englishman gave a half-embarrassed laugh. "What does he say?" asked the girl. She had only been two months in India, and these had been spent in falling in love.

"He thought we might like to know he was there, and that's all—a joke, isn't it?" answered her lover. She smiled, and so, holding each other's hands boldly, they stood facing that head above the roses.

He nodded cheerfully. "The Huzoors are doubtless 'about-to-marry-persons,'" came the voice. "It is not always so, even with the Huzoors. But this being different, if they require essences for the bridal, let them come to Hushmut. Rose, jasmin, orange, sandal, lemon-grass. I make them all in their season. Yea, even '*wylet*,'* which the *mems* love. It is not really *banafsha*, Huzoor; they grow not in the plains. I make it from the *babul* blossom, and none could tell the difference. Mayhap there is none, since He who makes the perfume of the flowers in His still, may send the same to many blossoms, as I send my essences to many lovers—even the noble people!"

There was distinct raillery in the last words, and the young Englishman's smile vanished.

"We people hold not with essences," he said curtly; adding to the girl, "Come, dear, I think we ought to go back. Your father will be wanting to go home—he has a lot of work, I know!"

A shuffle in the bushes made the lovers pause,—a curious shuffle such as a wounded bird makes in its efforts to escape.

"If the most noble will tarry, this slave will at least make the luck-offering to the bride," came the voice again, and to point its meaning the delicate brown hand held up a circular shallow basket heaped with rose-petals—heaped so lightly that the hand held it level, and it seemed to glide on the top of the bushes, heralding the grizzled head which slid after it with a faintly undulating movement.

The cause of this became clear when the limit of the roses was reached.

* Violet.

Hushmut the essence-maker must have been a cripple from birth. The loose blue cloth, such as gardeners wear knotted round their loins like a petticoat, hid, however, all deformity, even when he clambered up the marble edge of the old water-way and shuffled with sidelong jerks along to the pink muslin flounces.

The wearer's eyes grew soft suddenly. Perhaps the mystery of such births came home to the woman who was so soon to be a wife, perhaps a mother. She gave him a mother's look, anyhow, the look of almost passionate pity a woman gives to a child's deformity.

Perhaps he saw it. Anyhow, he paused, then, with his bold black eyes twinkling, held out the basket.

"A handful, Huzoor, for luck!" he cried.

"A rose ungathered is but a rose;
Pluck it, lover, don't mind a thorn!
Tuck it away in your bosom-clothes
And drink its beauty from night to morn."

The voice trilled and bubbled quite decorously, but the young Englishman intercepted a deliberate wink, and felt inclined to kick Hushmut to lower levels, till he remembered that the girl could not understand.

"Take a handful," he said, "and let's get rid of him." The girl obeyed, but, by mere chance, the little white hand with his ring on it did tuck the handful of pink rose-leaves away in the loose pink ruffles on her breast, whereat Hushmut's approval became so unmistakable that the young Englishman felt that the only thing was to escape from it.

Yet as he hurried the girl back to the summer-house he turned to listen to the essence-maker's voice as he went on with his song and his rose-picking:

"Dig, gardener, deep, till the Earth-lips cling tight.
Prune, gardener! keep those blushes to the light.
Then, gardener, sleep. He brings the scent by night.
Who knows
The secret of the perfume of the rose?"

There was nothing to be seen now but the stunted gray-green bushes half hidden in blossom; even the head had disappeared. They were a queer people, thought the young man, very difficult to understand. Then the refrain returned to him:

"Who knows
The secret of the perfume of the rose?"

"Hushmut?" answered an older man who lounged smoking in one of the marble-fretted balconies of the dead king's pleasure-house. "Ah, yes, he is quite a character. A scoundrel, I believe; at least, he knows all the worst lots in the city. They come to the garden at night, you

see, and the bazaar women get all their essences from him. So I expect he knows, at any rate, of all the deviltry that's going on. I wish I did." The speaker's face looked a trifle harassed.

"Is it true, sir, what they say," asked another voice, "that Hushmut is really the king's son? that his mother was a Brahmin girl they kidnapped, who cried herself to death in one of these rooms? Then, when the child was a cripple, the king—by Jove, he was a brute!—disowned it?"

"Is that about Hushmut?" asked the girl, who had joined the group in time to hear the last words.

The men looked at each other, and the older one said, "Yes, my dear; they say he was deserted by his parents because he was a cripple. Rather rough on him. Now I think I'll go and get your mother to come home. It's getting late. You'll follow, I suppose."

"Yes, father, with him," she said with a rose blush.

So, by degrees, in couples as a rule, but sometimes with a pale-faced child tucked into the carriage between father and mother, the pleasure-seekers left the garden of dead kings to the scent of the roses—left it cheerfully, calling back to their friends times and places where they were to meet again, as English men and women did on those fatal evenings in May, 1857.

Only the girl, in her pink frock, and her lover lingered, while the dog-cart in which he was to drive her home waited under the blossoming trees.

And as they stood talking, as lovers will, Hushmut, the essence-maker, thinking the coast was clear, came shuffling down the scented shadow of the path—for the sun had left the garden—pushing his basket of rose-leaves before him, dragging his crippledness behind him.

"Do you think he would show us his still?" said the girl suddenly. "I've never seen one. Ask him, will you?"

Hushmut's big, bold, black eyes twinkled. Certainly the Miss *Sahiba* might see. There was no secret in his work. He took the scent as he found it, as wise men took love.

Again there was that faint suspicion of raillery, only to be pardoned by the girl's ignorance, and also by a conviction that Hushmut counted on that ignorance and meant the remark only for the young Englishman. And so, oddly, the latter became conscious of a distinct antagonism between himself and the crippled essence-maker. It was absurd, ludicrous, but it existed, nevertheless.

There was not much to see in those vaults under the plinth of the pleasure palace in which Hushmut had set up his distillery. They were very low, very dark, the only light coming through the open door, and from the row of rose-shaped air-holes pierced at intervals in the plinth. Viewed from outside, these formed part of its raised and pierced

marble decoration. From within they looked quaint and flower-like, set as they were in the dim, shadowy vault, hidden here and there by the dumpy columns, showing through the arches distantly, softly, brightly pink; for Hushmut had pasted pink paper over them to keep out the bees and wasps, he explained, which otherwise, led by the scent of the flowers, came in troublesome numbers.

The rude still, like a huge cooking-pot, stood in one corner, and all about it lay trays on trays of fading rose-leaves.

"Pah! How sickly sweet! Let's get outside," said the young man after a brief glance round. But the girl stood looking curiously at a brownish-yellow mass piled beside the still. "What is that?" she asked. Hushmut's black eyes turned to her comprehendingly; he shuffled to the pile and held out a sample for her to see. She bent to look at it.

"Rose-leaves!" she said. "Oh! I see—after the scent has been taken out of them. Poor things! What a shame!"

Hushmut said something rapidly in Hindustani, and the girl turned to her companion for explanation.

"He says," translated the latter with a curiously grudging note in his voice, "that they have their use. He dries them in the sun and burns them in the furnace of his still."

She shook her head and smiled. "That's poor compensation!" Then she bent closer and sniffed regretfully at what Hushmut held.

"All gone!" she said, so like a child that her lover laughed at her tenderly.

"What else did you expect, you goose? 'Only the actions of the just smell sweet and blossom in the dust!' So come, we really must be off—it's getting late."

He felt in his pocket, and held out a bakshish to Hushmut; but the latter shook his head and once more said something rapidly in Hindustani. It had a note of petition in it, but the request was apparently not to the hearer's taste. That was to be seen from his face.

"What does he want?" asked the girl curiously.

"Nothing he is going to get," replied her lover, moving off. "The cheek of the man!"

But the pink muslin stood its ground.

"What is it?" she persisted. "I want to know. He doesn't look to me as if he meant to be rude, and—and"—her face softened—"if it is anything we can do, I'd like to do it. Tell me, please."

The young fellow shrugged his shoulders impatiently. "Oh, only foolery! He wants you to give him back some of the rose-leaves he gave you, that he may put them in his new brew, to—to make it sweeter; says the luck gift of a bride always does—"

The girl blushed and smiled all over. "Well, why not? It is a

pretty idea, anyhow." She drew out the handful of rose-leaves as she spoke, then paused with a faint wonder, for the warmth of their shelter had made their perfume almost bewildering.

"How—how sweet they are!" she murmured. Then, still smiling, but with the blush faded almost to paleness, she dropped the rose-leaves into the delicate, long-fingered hand.

"I hope it will be the sweetest essence you ever made," she said with a laugh; and Hushmut seemed to understand, for he smiled back and salaamed as he, in his turn, tucked the charm into his bosom for use when the still should be ready for closing; and as he did so he said in his high, suave voice, "May He who knows the secret of the rose protect the bride." He said it without the least suspicion of raillery—simply as a dignified piece of courtesy.

A minute afterwards the wheels of that last dog-cart, as it drove out of the garden, disturbed the birds, who had already begun to choose their resting-places for the night, since they, too, looked for the usual rest and peace in that fatal May-time.

And for a space the peace, the rest, settled on the garden. Only Hushmut's voice, as he busied himself in packing the pink petals into his still, told of any life in it beyond the birds, the flowers, the bees.

One of these, belated, drifted in to the vault through the open door, and hummed a background to the high, trilling voice:

"Pale, pale are the rose lips, sweet!
Red is the heart of the rose,
But red are the lips mine meet,
And your heart white as the snows."

Then a faint, almost noiseless patter of bare running feet paused at the door, and someone looked in to say breathlessly:

"It hath begun, they say. But who knows? I am off to the city to see."

Hushmut looked up, startled, from his rose-leaves—startled, nothing more.

"Begin? so soon? wherefore?"

"God knows!" came the breathless voice. "Mayhap it is a lie. Some thought it would not come at all. I will return and tell thee the news."

The faint, almost noiseless patter of bare feet died away, and there was peace and rest in the garden for another space. Only Hushmut shuffled to the door, looked out curiously, then shuffled back to his work; for that must be finished before dark, else the roses would spoil, squandering their sweetness. There was another pile of brownish-yellow residuum ready dried for the furnace, and as he filled a basket with it, his hands among the scentless stuff, a sudden remembrance of

his own impotence, his own deprivation, came to him. Perhaps he had seen a hint of the simile in the English girl's face.

He smiled half cynically, and muttered—"Only the dust of the rose remains for the perfume-seller."

He paused almost before the bit of treasured wisdom was ended. There was a sound of wheels, of a galloping horse's feet. Some one was coming back to the garden.

The next instant, through the open door, he saw two figures running—an Englishman, an English girl in a pink dress; the man's arm was round her as he ran; he looked back fearfully, then seemed to whisper something in her ear, and she gave answer back.

What was it? Hushmut knew by instinct.

He was thinking of the roof of the pleasure-house, of the winding stair that led to it, down which it would at least be possible to fling a foe before the end came; and *she* was thinking of the marble plinth below, where, when the end came, a woman might find safety from men's hands in death.

So they came on through the growing shadows.

Hushmut shuffled to the door and watched the figures calmly, indifferently, as they neared him; for the way to the winding stair lay up the steps which rose just beyond the low door of his distillery in the plinth.

Perhaps the dusk hid him from those two; perhaps even in broad daylight they would not, in their fierce desire to reach, not safety, but resistance, have seen him.

They did not, anyhow; but as they passed the door the girl's muslin flounce caught hard on its lintel hasp, and as in frantic haste she stooped to rip it free, the scent of those rose-leaves Hushmut had given her, still lingering in the ruffles at her breast, seemed to pass straight back into those same rose-leaves in his own.

That was all. Nothing more. But it brought back his last words to her: "May He who knows the secret of the rose protect the bride!"

Strange coincidence, since the chance of saving her had come to the speaker! The same instant his long-fingered brown hand was on her white one as she tugged at her dress.

"This way, Huzoor!" he cried in a loud voice for the man to hear. "There's a secret passage here—it leads to safety!" Safety! That word, better than resistance, not to the man himself, but as sole guardian to the girl, arrested him in a second—tempted him.

He looked, hesitated, then dragged his charge on—dragged her from anything with a dark skin to it.

But her white one touching this dark one found something in it to give confidence; or perhaps that fragrance from the still which sends a like perfume to many blossoms had passed from Hushmut's breast to

hers, as hers had to Hushmut's. He knows, who knows the secret of the perfume of the rose.

Anyhow, she hung back, she called pitifully, clamorously, "No! No! Let us trust him—let us take the chance!"

There was no time for remonstrance.

The next second they were in the cool, scented darkness of the vault, with those pink air-holes showing like shadowy roses among the low arches, the squat pillars.

"At the farther end," came Hushmut's voice, amid his shuffling, till the latter ceased in the rasping of a chain unhasped. "Here, Huzoor—it leads to the Summer Palace beyond the garden wall; so by the mango grove to the Residency. May He who knows the secret of the perfume of the rose protect the bride."

His voice sounded hollow in their ears as they ran down the vaulted passage which opened before them, lit at intervals by those cunning air-holes hidden flowerfully in the scroll-work of one of the marble-edged aqueducts, and the closing door behind them blew a breath of the rose scent from the vault after their retreating figures.

Two years had passed. Nine long months spent in keeping a foe at bay; three in following that spent and broken foe to the bitter end; and then a year of English skies and English faces to dull the memory of that long strain to mind and body.

And then, once more, a young Englishman with a girl in a pink dress drove into that garden of dead kings. But the four-square wall was in ruins. It had been a rallying-point of that spent and broken foe.

The garden itself was neglected, the roses unpruned. And those two were changed also, and an ayah holding a baby remained in the hired carriage which they left waiting for them under the blossoming trees, as the dog-cart had waited that May evening two years before.

"I'm afraid he must have thought us awfully ungrateful," said the man regretfully; "but it couldn't be helped at first. Then afterwards one had to move on. But I did write, you know, more than once about him, after we got a grip on the place again; so I hope they have done something."

"They will have to now, at any rate," said the wearer of the pink dress firmly. The sight of the garden, changed, neglected as it was, had brought back the very picture of that grizzled head with the curved hair slipping through the rose-bushes, the delicate dark hand holding the tray of rose-leaves, as it slid over the bushes with its luck-offering for the bride. Yes; even if justice had been slow, inevitably slow, it should come now—this very evening, though she and her husband had only arrived in the station that morning.

They went to the rose-square first, but Hushmut was not there. Then, seeing by the lack of blossom that the time for roses was not yet, they went on to the orange groves. There was no one there. So, doubtfully, they passed to the jasmines, to the lemon-grass.

But no one was to be seen. Nothing was to be heard but the lazy yet insistent cry of some one scaring the birds from the pomegranates.

"Let us ask him. He may know," suggested the wearer of the pink dress. So they called him and he came, an old man, wizened, careworn.

Yes, he said, he knew. Wherefore not, when he had guarded fruit in that garden since he was a boy? There was not much to guard now, owing to past evil. Hushmut the essence-maker?—Hushmut was dead. No one made essences any more. How did he die? Very simply. He had seen it with his own eyes when he was guarding fruit. The Huzoors had doubtless heard of the evil times, even though, as the coachman had told him, they had just come from *wilayet*. Well, it began quite suddenly one evening in May. It was the peaches he was guarding then. There had been a "fools' dinner" in the garden, and afterwards a young sahib and a miss in a pink dress had come running in to take refuge from the troopers. He had seen them, but what could he do? But Hushmut had shown them the secret passage, no doubt. Anyhow, he had come out alone, and closed the door, and sate beside it singing when the troopers rode up.

And doubtless, seeing that he was friends with all the bad walkers in the city through the selling of his essences, they would have believed his tale that the Huzoors had not passed that way, they would have believed, but for a bit of the Miss-Sahiba's dress, which had caught in the door-hasp. So they knew what he had done, and, being enraged, had killed him there by the door. It was quite simple.

Quite. So simple that those two said nothing. Only their hands sought each other as they turned back to the summer-house.

"I should like to see the place again," said the wearer of the pink dress in a hard, even voice. "I wonder if the door is open."

It was, for no one made essences now. So they entered.

The still stood in the corner, as before. The pile of that strange fuel lay between it and the trays of rose-leaves. But there was no difference between them now. Both were yellow, scentless; and though the pink paper which Hushmut had pasted over the rose-shaped air-holes was all broken and torn by birds and winds and weather, the bees did not drift in.

For there was no scent to lead them on.

None.

The winds of two long years had swept it away absolutely. What else was to be expected?

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Yet a vague disappointment showed in the woman's face, as it had in the girl's.

But this time the man's voice trembled as he answered her look with the words,—

“Only the actions of the just smell sweet and blossom in the dust.”

WASHINGTON'S DEATH AND THE DOCTORS

DECEMBER, 1799

BY SOLOMON SOLIS COHEN, M.D.

WHEN the author of “The True George Washington” says, “There can be scarcely a doubt that the treatment of Washington's last illness by the doctors was little short of murder,” he gives blunt utterance to an opinion quite widely held. Physicians have not spoken so bluntly, but there have not been wanting medical writers to question the wisdom of the “copious bleedings,” the blistering, and the purging that Dr. Craik and one of his colleagues deemed necessary. That patients are not so treated to-day is true; but it would be strange had medicine alone failed to advance in a hundred years, and the physicians of 1799 cannot justly be condemned for failure to have anticipated the discoveries of the nineteenth century.

Let us briefly recall the facts: On Thursday, December 12, 1799, Washington “rode abroad on his plantations” from ten o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon. During the most of this time “rain, hail, and snow fell alternately, with a cold wind.” The next day he complained of soreness of the throat and “had a hoarseness, which increased towards evening.” He thought so little of this, however, that but for a snowstorm he would again have ridden out on Friday morning, and in the afternoon he did go out in the snow to mark some trees to be felled—a work not urgent. He passed his evening as usual, rejecting Colonel Lear's suggestion that he needed medicine with the remark that he “never took anything to carry off a cold, but let it go as it came.” At two o'clock the following morning, Saturday, December 14, he was seized with a violent chill. Breathing became difficult, and speech was painful. So soon as the house was stirring—about five o'clock—he sent for an overseer and ordered the man to bleed him. At this time he “could swallow nothing,” and was “convulsed and almost suffocated.” Only about twelve ounces of blood were taken, although the General urged that the opening be made larger and the flow encouraged. Not until some time later, when it became evident that he was rapidly growing worse, could he be prevailed upon to send for his old friend and physician,

Dr. James Craik, who seems to have been a man of scientific education, strong character, and good judgment. Washington placed entire trust and confidence in him; and the two had been intimately associated professionally, personally, and officially since the days of Braddock's field. Dr. Craik did not reach Mount Vernon until eleven o'clock on Saturday morning. In a communication published in *The Times*, of Alexandria, Virginia, December, 1799, by Drs. Craik and Dick, the subsequent history is given as follows:

"Discovering the case to be highly alarming, and foreseeing the fatal tendency of the disease, two consulting physicians were immediately sent for, who arrived, one at half past three, the other at four o'clock in the afternoon. In the interim were employed two copious bleedings, a blister was applied to the part affected, two moderate doses of calomel were given, and an injection was administered, which operated on the lower intestines, but all without any perceptible advantage, the respiration becoming still more difficult and distressing. Upon the arrival of the first of the consulting physicians it was agreed, as there were yet no signs of accumulation in the bronchial vessels of the lungs, to try the result of another bleeding, when about thirty-two ounces of blood were drawn without the smallest apparent alleviation of the distress. Vapors of vinegar and water were frequently inhaled, ten grains of calomel were given, succeeded by repeated doses of emetic tartar, amounting, in all, to five or six grains, with no other effect than a copious discharge from the bowels. The powers of life seemed now manifestly yielding to the force of the disorder. Blisters were applied to the extremities, together with a cataplasm of bran and vinegar to the throat. Speaking, which was painful from the beginning, now became more impracticable, respiration grew more and more contracted and imperfect, till half after eleven o'clock on Saturday night, when, retaining the full possession of his intellect, he expired without a struggle."

The diagnosis made by Dr. Craik and concurred in by Drs. Dick and Brown was "cynanche trachealis," which they render in English as "inflammation of the upper part of the wind-pipe."

As the symptoms point to the somewhat rare affection now known as "acute oedematous laryngitis," it is usually assumed that they were mistaken; but the nomenclature of pathology has changed so much that it is by no means certain that part of the supposed error in diagnosis is not merely a difference in terminology.

Although Morgagni, in 1765, and subsequently Boerhaave and Van Swieten, had given from post-mortem studies an account of laryngeal oedema, even so great a pathologist as Bichat described it imperfectly in 1801, and it was not until 1808 that Bayle communicated to a learned society of Paris the clinical and pathologic studies through

which the disease of which Washington probably perished became clearly differentiated. Granting, therefore, that a mistake in diagnosis was made, it was one that the imperfect knowledge of the day could not avoid. It is evident, moreover, that certain essential facts were clearly recognized by those country doctors of a century ago: namely, that there was present in the upper portion of the breathing-tube of their illustrious patient an inflammatory swelling obstructing the passage of air, making the act of swallowing difficult and painful, and interfering with speech, and that unless they could restore the normal flow of blood through the parts and thus reduce the swelling, suffocation must take place. To this end, therefore, they directed their treatment.

To understand both the wisdom and the ineffectiveness of that treatment it is necessary to understand the conditions present; and to make these clear it will be necessary to picture, though briefly, and in mere outline, the construction of the breathing apparatus of man.

The human lung is made up of innumerable microscopic sacs with subdivisions known as air-cells, which are the expanded and specialized terminations of certain small tubes springing from each "bronchiole" or terminal twig of the respiratory tree, the whole being roughly comparable to a bunch of grapes. Pairs of bronchioles unite to form larger, and these to form still larger "bronchial tubes," which finally converge in the main "bronchus." The two main bronchi, one from each lung, then join with each other and form the trachea (or wind-pipe) like the branches of an inverted Δ . The bronchial tubes are made up in part of cartilage (or gristle) to give them stability, and in part of membrane and fibrous tissue to give them suppleness and elasticity. As the larger bronchi, and finally the trachea, are reached, the cartilaginous portions become larger and more frequent, and are disposed in a special manner. At the upper part of the air-tube the cartilages become still more highly specialized, and the structure known as the larynx or voice-box appears. This is functionally, structurally, and developmentally a continuation of the wind-pipe, modified for the production of voice. A cartilage (*cricoid*) thicker and stronger than the tracheal rings forms the base; then, passing upward, there appears as in the trachea a membranous interval, and then a large expanded shield-shaped cartilage (*thyroid*) the prominent upper and anterior portion of which forms the "Adam's apple." Above the thyroid cartilage is again a membrane, and then the ring of cartilage is replaced by a bone (*hyoid*) to which by muscles and ligaments is attached the tongue, and the breath-tube ends. But the open mouth of the breath-tube, just behind the tongue, must be protected from the entrance of food, and a little cartilage (*epiglottis*)—the lid of the voice-box—is found here, arranged by shape and muscular and membranous attachments to act as a valve, open during breathing and closed during swallowing. The

air-cells, the bronchioles, bronchi, trachea, and larynx are lined with mucous membrane, in which and beneath which, in the connective tissue between the mucous membrane and the cartilage or outer layer of fibrous tissue (submucous tissue), are found nerves, blood-vessels, lymph-vessels, etc. In the connective tissue are certain spaces that normally contain the fluid lymph, and which may become overfilled with a fluid of morbid origin in certain forms of inflammation. Within the larynx, attached to certain cartilages, are found two bands of muscular and fibrous tissue known as the vocal cords, or vocal bands, which during voice production are brought close together, leaving a mere chink for the passage of air, and during breathing are separated more or less widely.

The wind-pipe is oval in section, its greatest diameter averaging one inch, while the "chink of the glottis" or space between the vocal bands is a triangular opening, averaging one inch in length, and when at its greatest, about one-half inch in width at the posterior portion or base of the triangle. Small at best, yet sufficient for its purpose, it is the gate-way of the breath, the very portal of life. Its obstruction means danger; its occlusion, death. Here, probably, in the case of General Washington, the fatal swelling took place; and concerning this a word may be necessary.

In the process known as inflammation, the flow of blood through the affected part is obstructed, and sometimes completely cut off. The blood-vessels are engorged, and through this and cell-multiplication the part becomes much enlarged. Sometimes when the inflammation affects structures having much connective tissue with large lymph-spaces, and under certain exciting conditions, fluid will leak, as it were, out of the vessels, and the inflamed part will become greatly distended. This severe process is termed acute inflammatory œdema. Inflammation of the mucous membrane of any part of the respiratory tract necessarily interferes with breathing. In the larynx, a simple superficial or catarrhal inflammation without much swelling need not cause great discomfort or danger, but if the inflammation extend to the submucous tissues and be so severe as to cause œdema, or if œdema arise from some non-inflammatory cause, as at times happens, the air may be entirely shut off from the wind-pipe, the bronchi, and the lungs. Catarrhal laryngitis is a common affection, the usual "hoarse cold," or throat cold, and yields readily to treatment. In some cases, whether from severity of the exposure, from complicating infection, disease or injury, from previous weakness of the part, or other cause, it may suddenly take on the œdematos character, and the change usually occurs, as in the historic example we are considering, in the small hours of the morning, when the vital tide is at ebb.

Sometimes œdematos laryngitis follows a "sore throat," or, in

technical language, "pharyngitis;" in still rarer cases it occurs primarily as laryngeal oedema, though concerning this qualified observers even to-day are not agreed. When the vocal bands are involved, the distress is intense and suffocation is imminent, for the chink between them, the door-way of the breath, may be reduced to a mere irregular slit. Even when the oedematous swelling is not sufficient to shut off the air-way, there may be from irritation, and even from the patient's pain and fear, spasmodic closure of the vocal bands, and thus the victim become suffocated by an internal self-strangling. When the epiglottis is affected its mucous membrane becomes greatly swollen and every movement is painful; thus swallowing produces great agony and is finally refused. The distress in breathing, and at last the inability to draw breath, the painfulness, and at last the impossibility of swallowing and of speech, described by Colonel Lear and General Washington's physicians, are thus explainable upon the supposition that he suffered with acute inflammatory oedema of the larynx, determined by exposure and neglect.

Are the physicians blamable for not recognizing the conditions?

In 1799 it was not known that the larynx could be examined by means of its reflection in a mirror introduced into the throat above and behind the tongue. Not until 1855 had Signor Manuel Garcia, of London, devised a practical laryngoscope for the purpose of studying the movements of his own vocal bands in singing; and not until two or three years later did Dr. Czermak, of Buda-Pesth, perfect the instrument for medical purposes. It was only in 1896 that Dr. Kirstein, of Vienna, perfected an instrument by which in certain cases the tongue can be so drawn forward as to expose the interior of the larynx to direct inspection. It is true that in some cases of oedema of the epiglottis that structure projects up behind the tongue so that it can readily be seen, and that in the absence of a laryngoscope or of Kirstein's "auto-scope" one may sometimes detect with the finger the swelling of the epiglottis and of the folds of mucous membrane that bound the entrance to the larynx. But again be it said, such cases are not of everyday occurrence, and the knowledge that these conditions were to be sought for could become possible only through repeated post-mortem investigations. Post-mortem examinations were not often permitted in America a century ago. Even in France, then the home of pathology, ten years were to elapse before Bayle's publication of his researches made the facts accessible to students.

In the existing state of medical science in 1799 the diagnosis of "obstruction by inflammatory swelling in the upper part of the breath-tube" was the only one possible; and that this is what Drs. Craik and Dick designated by the term "cynanche trachealis" is shown by the manner in which they Englished it.

To-day the condition would not be treated by general bleeding. Leeches might be applied, or if the œdema occupied the epiglottis and that portion of the larynx above the vocal bands, the tumefied structures would be nicked with a knife (scarified), in such a way, however, that the blood should not run into the wind-pipe, and this would probably afford sufficient relief to the obstruction in both circulation and respiration to bring about recovery. Drugs to relax circulation and overcome spasm, oxygen and a supporting medicament might be given by inhalation or under the skin. Ice might be applied over the larynx. Some physicians would inject under the skin a drug to provoke quick sweating, and a hydrogogue cathartic would be given to drain off some of the water of the blood, in order that through thirst on the part of the vessels generally the effused liquid might be reabsorbed. Were the vocal bands or the larynx below them so involved that scarification would be impracticable or dangerous, it might be necessary to open the wind-pipe below the swelling (tracheotomy).

It is doubtful whether tracheotomy would have been consented to by General Washington and his family; and had it been performed without saving him, Mr. Ford's "scarcely" and "little short" might have been omitted from the indictment. But this operation, though sometimes simple, is often extremely difficult, calling for the highest degree of surgical skill and quickness to meet emergencies, even in these days of marvellous surgery. A hundred years ago it was rarely done even by the most celebrated surgeons, and the three doctors of rural Virginia might well be pardoned for not attempting it.

But is there no other means than tracheotomy to restore the occluded caliber of the breathing-tube? So late as fifteen years ago the answer would have been "No." To-day, thanks to the genius, the patience, the industry, and the devotion of Dr. Joseph O'Dwyer, of New York, we have a tube that can be placed, and will remain, between the vocal bands, and instruments that enable one to insert or remove it through the mouth. Intubation has almost entirely displaced tracheotomy in the treatment of membranous croup and laryngeal diphtheria. It is applicable in some cases of laryngeal œdema. It has saved the lives of thousands.

Would it have saved the life of Washington? Lacking, as we do, exact information concerning the seat of obstruction, the extent and degree of the œdema, and the existence of infection or complications, the question cannot be answered.

Was the treatment described by Drs. Craik and Dick justified?

The conception of inflammation entertained by the physicians of 1799 is not the same as that taught in 1899. The cellular structure and the cellular pathology were unknown, the rôle of the blood-vessels

was rather guessed at than realized. Infection and its processes were but vaguely and imperfectly understood. The very name of microbe was far in the future.

In the absence of the knowledge that has since been given to the world, what was Washington's trusted friend and attendant, Dr. James Craik, to do? One thing first of all—to bleed his patient freely in the hope that by mechanical and nervous influence the general emptying of the vessels might bring about the renewal of the obstructed circulation in the larynx. Secondly, to try to drain the water of the blood by means of intestinal discharges and free sweating; hence the calomel and the antimony, which indeed served their immediate purpose. Thirdly, to remove serum from the blood in the neighborhood of the inflamed part; hence the blister. Fourthly, to try to allay the pain and oppose the local effects of cold by heat and sedative applications; hence the inhalations of steam and vinegar. Modern research has given us better diaphoretics than antimony, and better medicaments for inhalation than vinegar, but the principles dictating their employment were good.

Edematous laryngitis, even when promptly recognized and skilfully treated, is very fatal; of Bayle's seventeen cases sixteen perished. Sestier, studying in 1852 the recorded cases of laryngeal œdema of various kinds, found that death had resulted in one hundred and fifty-eight out of two hundred and thirteen cases in spite of tracheotomy having been performed thirty times. Of forty-one cases communicated in 1898 to the American Laryngological Association as having been all that had been recorded in the world's literature of ten years, but twenty-nine recovered, tracheotomy having been performed seven times with six recoveries. The effusion is rarely simply serous, but in a number of cases is in part purulent. Whether or not, as claimed by some modern authors, the disease is always septic, and closely akin if not identical with erysipelas, it is true that in many cases blood-poisoning is added to the local dangers. That such was the case with General Washington his severe chill might indicate. Moreover, the prolonged impairment of breathing in itself causes the retention in the blood of impurities, carbonic acid especially, that should be removed through the lungs, and this increases the liability to death.

Had Washington sent for Dr. Craik earlier, it is quite possible that some simple treatment might have averted the severity of the attack; or even had he adopted the good old-fashioned plan of taking a hot mustard foot-bath, and drinking a hot whiskey-toddy, and with blankets and hot bottles bringing on "a good sweat," the occurrence of œdema might possibly have been prevented; but once the chill and the œdema had occurred, the chances of recovery were slight. Had he then been freely bled, or even had the bleeder he later sent for been

less timid, the morbid process might perhaps have been held in check; at all events, there was ample justification for the attempt so to "jugulate the inflammation." Or, if the disease depended upon toxæmia (blood-poisoning) of any origin, it needed but to follow the venesection with the infusion into the veins or beneath the skin of "physiologic salt solution," to conform with the best modern, scientific practice. The subsequent bleeding offered less hope of success, but it did not greatly weaken one of Washington's large frame and remarkable physique even at sixty-eight years of age; and it gave him the one chance of recovery that the knowledge of the day afforded.

ALPHONSE DAUDET AND HIS INTIMATES

BY JEAN FRANÇOIS RAFFAËLLI

Translated by Maria Lansdale

WE love to talk of the friends we have lost, familiar friends whom we have chosen in the course of a lifetime, who have become a part of our very selves. The hours passed and shared with them represent the best of our lives.

For me Daudet possessed every attraction. My senior by ten years, he embodied a ripe experience; he was handsome, with the peculiar charm of our men of the South, and lastly he was a brilliant and untiring talker, conjuring up wonderful pictures, his imagination playing about some trifling incident until he had transferred it into the realms of the marvellous. The circumstance of a young girl stooping on her way to the fountain to tie her shoe became in his hands a captivating fairy tale.

I never wearied of hearing him "tell stories." But first of all I want to describe the odd fashion in which we first met, a curious prelude to a long friendship.

Towards 1878—think of it, over twenty years ago!—Daudet and I were both in the habit of frequenting the house of Nittis, the Italian painter, who had at that time one of those Parisian salons open to any one who had made a name in art or letters or in the world of connoisseurs. I was barely thirty, and the art of painting, at all times my passion, was then something absolutely sacred. To attack it was like attacking the Ark of the Covenant, and merited instant death. It was nothing short of sacrilege. Daudet, exceedingly near-sighted, and barely able to distinguish pictures, had nevertheless undauntedly formed his opinions about them, and almost denied their very existence. For him painting was nothing but smoke and fog.

Certain speeches of his on the subject of this beloved art having

been repeated to me, I had taken them as a personal insult, and could scarcely give expression to my feeling of anger against him.

Now, on the evening when we first met, Nittis had sent for some of those *pifferari*—very common at one time in Paris—who strolled about the streets armed with harps and violins; and a barbarous concert was organized on the spot, further supplemented by a tarantella which Nittis told them to play and started to dance to himself. "Come on, Daudet!" he called out, "dance a tarantella." And Daudet tried to do it, but finding he was not succeeding to his satisfaction he soon withdrew, exclaiming, "It is impossible to dance; those people don't keep time."

My hour of vengeance had come! "They don't keep time?" I cried. "Why, Daudet, you have made a mistake. See here!" And with that I threw myself into the measure, and, carried away by a mixture of anger and excitement, I managed, it seems, to achieve such prodigies of lightness, of grace and activity, that every one present wanted to know if Vestris himself had not given me lessons.

I had triumphed at last; but Daudet, pale with passion, brusquely turned his back on the presumptuous young man who had thus defied him like one possessed of a very demon, and for long years to come we met without speaking to one another. With his usual acuteness, Daudet had at once seized upon the hidden significance of that dance, which from my point of view was a war-dance—war open and declared between him and me. Fifteen years later we talked this incident over, amicably seated on the grass at his magnificent place, Champrosay, and then I realized how far my former fanaticism had led me astray, and how delicate and sure was his appreciation of every intellectual effort.

Daudet was a child of the South Country. Among Frenchmen, part of whom are Celts and part Latins, he was a Latin. He had that feverish imagination which, together with a keen appreciation of all the little familiar concerns of life, characterizes the Latin mind. Later he was to immortalize this type—the man of Southern France—in those three well-known books, the "Tartarins," which are for the Frenchmen of those parts about what "Don Quixote" is for the Spaniards of Seville or Cordova.

I remember his telling us of his childhood passed in Lyons, where his father, constantly changing his mind and going into some new enterprise, never succeeded in making a fortune. The boy was a great reader in those days, and, already very near-sighted, saw all exterior objects through a mist, and so lived in a sort of dream; hence his wonderful imagination, ceaselessly occupied in the task of creating and giving forth; hence the hidden, dreamy poetry of the man. He has recorded many anecdotes of his boyhood in "Le Petit Chose," but they are conceived more in the spirit of a poet than of an observer. He began by writing poetry.

He told us one day of how, having read the opening pages of this autobiography of his youth to a friend who pronounced it insipid, he proceeded to stuff it full of wild adventures, all of them purely imaginary. We must not therefore take all that he tells us of his boyhood in this book in too literal a sense.

When he first arrived in Paris, Daudet was extremely poor; all, indeed, that we know of the journey up from Lyons is that he remained for fifty hours without food. Once in Paris, however, he quickly found a way out of his difficulties, child of the South that he was; for it is a recognized fact that the Southerner brings to everything he undertakes a spirit of enthusiasm and optimism that in itself insures success. In this characteristic no one surpassed Daudet, and in a very short time he obtained the position of private secretary to the Duc de Morny, natural brother to Napoleon III., and his confidential adviser. It is to this time that Daudet's period of elegance belongs—waistcoats of peacock-tail or mouse-gray plush, shading into white, and long-napped hats. He had to have his hair cut, though, for Morny insisted that long hair was in bad form.

Daudet was accused later of having soiled Morny's memory in "The Nabob," where the latter was recognized in the character of Morra. This charge he always denied, declaring that he had portrayed Morra with all the charm of a man of fashion and the keen scent of a student of human nature. Daudet's struggles for a livelihood were hard enough at times. I have spoken of his arrival in Paris, nearly fainting with hunger after the long journey, and only kept up by a few drops of brandy given him by a fellow-traveller moved with pity for the handsome boy. At a much later period it was still all he could do to support himself by his pen.

At one of those Sunday gatherings of Edmond de Goncourt, held in what we called the "Goncourt Attic," Daudet told us how in 1875 he was obliged to abandon literature altogether for a time and take any position he could find, so low had his finances become. Long afterwards, towards the close of his life, he made as much as thirty thousand dollars a year by writing! while to-day, the rights over all his books and articles enjoyed by an author's heirs for fifty years after his death must, thanks to the great popularity of his works, assure a handsome revenue to his family.

This struggle among our literary men and artists is often very severe. There are a great many writers, and it is usually those who follow a beaten path, that succeed in pleasing the multitude.

Daudet once related the following incident: A friend of his proposed to put his name up for one those literary dinners at which a number of men of similar tastes or occupations meet together once a month. This particular set was composed of third-rate writers, manu-

facturers of those novels at so much a line which appear in our one-sou newspapers. Daudet, without giving the matter much thought, agreed, but some days later his friend appeared and in a shame-faced way announced that he had been *retoqué* (refused): "They decided that your talent was too individual!"

And Daudet never became an Academician. As far back as the time of his earliest successes he perceived that it would be a difficult matter for him ever to be admitted; indeed, he had long since resolutely placed himself in opposition to that "literary salon," and later, when it only rested with himself to become a member, he persisted in this attitude of contempt, and would not be a candidate. He did on one occasion, however, allow himself the somewhat ironical pleasure of making an Academician. This is how the incident is told in the "Journal des Goncourts": "He asked Pierre Loti one day on the eve of an election why he did not present himself. Loti replied that he was perfectly willing to do so, but was ignorant how to set about it. Thereupon Daudet offered to write the letter of presentation. He did so, and a few months later Loti was nominated and made his entry beneath the Cupola, wearing the coat embroidered with green palms and the traditional sword."

Daudet's wife, a woman of unusual intelligence as well as of sound common sense, was of great service to him throughout his career; for, left to himself, he would have had very little idea how to lay up that fortune which alone made the last years of his life possible. He could never have learned to hoard. He had a perfectly childish way of regarding his gains, both great and small. Thus he once told us he was nearly hypnotized by the sums he got from the theatres. For example, when something of his was running at a theatre he would with the utmost anxiety open the letter that came every morning containing a statement of the receipts for the preceding night, and could not recover all day from his annoyance if these had fallen off a few francs.

Among his intimates Daudet was gentle, kindly, and confiding, but underneath his nature was violent. "If any one belonging to me is attacked," he would say, "I sometimes develop into a wild beast." Nevertheless, he knew how to hold himself in check and to wait.

"Give destiny time," he once said to his son, who had been recounting his grievances; "she will take the burden of your hatred upon herself."

It was curious to see him at work. Being so excessively near-sighted, he had to have a very high desk in order that the paper might lie close to his eyes, and he would stay hour after hour covering the paper with his fine, elegant handwriting.

He preferred a simple mode of life, show and luxury attracting him

but little and the pleasures of the table no more. He had preserved the frugal ways of the South of France, which resemble in some sort those of Spain and Italy. Olives, figs, a few anchovies spread on a piece of bread, these were what he liked to eat, and plain dishes always seemed to him the best. In his work he sometimes performed tremendous feats of endurance, working for twenty hours out of the twenty-four!

His gift of impromptu story-telling was well known, and in our gatherings every one held his tongue when Daudet was talking, and we all knew (a circumstance that only enhanced the enjoyment) that his tales were for the most part improvised on the spot for his own pleasure and that of his hearers.

It was interesting to watch him, when a story had been well received, search through his mind to see what he could find further to develop and carry on the theme, and yield a longer and more brilliant period. Nor did he at all like to have anyone steal the fruit of a success which gratified him and seemed to belong to him. It was as though he said, "You have good legs, all of you; let me at least, if I can no longer walk, fly with the wings of my imagination." I remember very well how angry he was once made, when we were all at Goncourt's, by an occurrence of this nature. A friend of mine, recently back from a long journey into the interior of China, had related to me certain extremely piquant anecdotes touching the habits of the Empress: one of these was about a certain woman of the imperial household charged with the duty of looking after her Highness's physical comforts, and I told them how delighted the Empress had been by the following ingenious device: The attendant one day, having first undressed her mistress, proceeded to rub her skin all over with fine honey. On being asked the object of this she replied by causing her to lie down on a strip of fine, perfumed linen, and then, opening a large basket, let loose twenty-four little dogs, who at once began licking and lapping the Empress's body, an operation which she enjoyed so highly that she presented a large sum of money to the fortunate possessor of so pretty an imagination. I then told them two more anecdotes just as curious and still more piquant, which were much appreciated.

While I was talking it was amusing to watch Daudet. He jumped up, changed his seat, threw in side remarks calculated to confuse me, and the instant I had finished my little tales rushed into a marvellous story, where he soon lost his foothold, carried away as he was by anger that one of us should have deprived him for even a few moments of his laurels as a story-teller.

I can recall some of the fancies he used to weave for us out of his head and on the spur of the moment. One day, for example, he was arguing the point that on the stage it is a mistake to insist too strongly on any one form of sentiment, whatever it may be. "Listen," said he.

"I recall a little incident which may serve to illustrate my meaning: A woman dressed in black one day entered an omnibus in which I happened to be. She was in deep mourning, and her countenance was so worn, so contracted, so furrowed with grief, that her neighbor could not refrain from asking what terrible sorrow it could be that had thus left its marks upon her. Whereupon the woman, amid the sympathetic attention of all the little world in the omnibus,—including the conductor, who did nothing but blow his nose so as to hide his tears,—told how she had lost first one child and within a very few days another. Every one pitied her greatly; but when she proceeded with many tears to tell of the death of a third child, her hearers were somewhat less moved, and finally, when she launched into a long account of the loss of a fourth,—devoured by a crocodile on the banks of the Nile,—every one in the omnibus burst out laughing.

A really typical story, though, and one which he told us several times, was that of the "Three Hats." Founded on a real incident, this tale contained the fantastic element so characteristic of his imagination, suddenly and without warning developing into the marvellous—a fairy story. This is the way he used to tell it:

"A great many strange things come to pass in the course of one's life. I shall remember to my last day the following curious experience: Being once on a trip to Munich, I bought three of those little green cloth hats such as are worn by the Tyrolese, who ornament them by sticking a feather in the back. These hats had greatly attracted me, and I determined to take them back as presents to three of my friends. On reaching Paris I came across the three hats in my trunk, and, much pleased at having a memento of my travels for each of the three men who were at that time my dearest friends, I presented one to Bataille, who was enchanted with it, another to Du Boys, and the third to Gill, the caricaturist. Some time afterwards, while we were walking together in the forest of Meudon, Bataille, who had on his green hat, began recounting all manner of incoherent, crazy tales: it was the beginning of insanity. A few days later Du Boys, wearing his green hat, came to the house and held forth in the most violent manner to Madame Daudet, and shortly after this Gill was arrested, mad, wandering about the country a hundred leagues from his home and wearing the famous green hat!"

"My three friends, to each of whom I had given a green hat, all went insane, and died insane one after another!"

It was with poetic inventions like the above that he amused himself during the ten years when his malady kept him chained to an arm-chair, his legs being too weak to support him. All the activity and vitality of his body seemed to have taken refuge in the brain. And what horrible sufferings he endured! I can see him rise suddenly in the midst of

one of our conversations, or from the table, and, asking some one of us to give him his arm, retire to a distant part of the room, open his shirt, and then and there inject some grains of morphine, so intolerable had the pain become.

One day he exclaimed, "Ah, what melancholy afternoons I have to pass. Why, I sometimes wish I were a woman, and could cry."

Another day he said to us, "Oh, how I suffer . . . do you know the pain in my foot is sometimes so severe that it seems as though a train of cars were passing over it?"

Speaking once of a "first night" he said, "I shall take some morphine and some very strong cigars in case I cannot stand the pain." And he had become unable to sleep without the aid of chloral. It may have been this constant suffering, and the sight of it for the rest of us, that caused the conversation to turn so frequently on death, Daudet one day rejoicing especially in the theory propounded by an English doctor that death was in itself a delightful sensation, voluptuous, resembling the action of anæsthetics. And then all the brilliant minds who composed that little circle would rebel at their own utter incapacity to understand death.

Daudet on another occasion dreamed of dying surrounded by his friends and conversing of the hereafter.

He once told Goncourt, who relates the incident, that whenever he entered a new apartment for the first time his eye instinctively searched for the spot where his coffin would be placed! Daudet's son, little Lucien, a child of quick apprehension, used to be greatly frightened by these conversations, and would sometimes burst into tears. It was this child who one day exclaimed with quivering voice, at the same time pushing away his plate, "No, I do not want to eat any more, it is too tiresome." And a good deal later, when this same boy had had a little too much Schopenhauer, he exclaimed with tears, "Well, then, if life is like that, it is not worth the trouble of living!"

But my mind turns more willingly to the last years of Daudet's life. There was then a certain group of us who were in the habit of assembling every Sunday at the elder Goncourt's and every Thursday at Daudet's,—in winter in the Rue de Bellechasse and in summer at his Champrosay Chateau. All the very brightest minds of the day frequented those two houses. I remember meeting at them Guy Maupassant, Paul Bourget, Zola, Jules Lemaître, Maurice Barrès, Lecomte, de l' Isle, Octave Mirbeau, Gustave Geffroy, Pierre Loti, Paul Hervien, and all the young literary men of the time.

A dinner always preceded the soirée, and at these dinners the most delightful conversations would be started, and Daudet, never interfered with by any one, would have his say on every topic.

I will always remember a certain one of those dinners, and the lively

discussion that arose and was the cause of a breach between Zola and myself.

There were present on that occasion, besides the Daudet family, Zola and Madame Zola, Edmond de Goncourt, Rodenbach, the poet, and my wife. I should mention that Zola's work had always been antipathetic to me. While recognizing his enormous talent, I was repelled by a general tendency in his work which seemed to me bad. The man himself was no more congenial, and I could never understand that series of novels which he intended should be to him, Zola, what the "Comédie Humaine" was to Balzac. I could never comprehend how in the midst of our modern society, with its restless activity, of our habits, of the ever-changing life of the present day, an artist could in cold blood, and without being in any way obliged to, write at the top of a blank page, "Chapter I. of a series of twenty volumes to be written"!

The discussion turned that day upon an important piece of work of the painter Tissot, a series of a hundred small water-color studies of the life of Jesus, all of the same size, all carefully finished, very realistic, and revealing a power of close observation. Tissot had gone several times in the course of the work to Jerusalem, and had spared no effort to bring it to perfection; but to my mind it failed by reason of his having abandoned all the traditions in his treatment. Carried away by his narrow realism, he would draw a literal portrait of any Jew he might happen to run across in the Holy City, and calmly write beneath it "Saint John" or "Saint Peter"!

An argument followed as to the amount of realism permissible in the treatment of legendary personages, and, curiously enough, every one of our distinguished friends—Zola, Goncourt, Daudet—sided with Tissot against my view that a legendary style should characterize the treatment of legendary personages, and that the casual Jew represented by Tissot under the name of Saint John or Saint Peter meant nothing at all and did in no wise represent Saint Peter or Saint John. Finally, when I questioned the painter's sincerity in this long-drawn-out undertaking, Zola detected some allusion to himself and his twenty volumes of *Rougon-Macquart*, and chose to take offence, and from that day our acquaintance ceased.

No matter; the last two years passed in intimate intercourse with those commanding spirits will have been the best ones of my life. The two weekly gatherings of leading minds at Goncourt's and Daudet's represented the intellectual effort of an entire epoch. Daudet dead, Goncourt dead, we have none of those great intellectual spirits left gifted with the power to draw around them a circle of other brilliant minds.

I recollect well the circumstances of Goncourt's death, which took

place when he was staying with his friend Daudet in the charming chateau of Champrosay. I recall vividly those terrible moments when the great man, so warmly loved, was laid on his bier. I can see Daudet take my arm,—for ill as he was, he wished to accompany his friend to the very end,—and then say, “No, it is expecting too much of my weakness: I cannot do it,” and I then went up alone to lay the magnificent old man in his coffin, after first assuring myself thoroughly and reverently that life was actually extinct in the body of a man of lofty intellect, of great goodness, and of great dignity of life, whom I had loved as a father.

But all that has passed away. I have myself become one of the “seniors,” and I have seen so much and lived through so much that I seem to be a hundred years old.

Daudet dead, the delightful Champrosay chateau is to be sold. It is one of those simple, attractive-looking chateaux which are to be found in the middle part of France, surrounded by great green lawns, woods, and gardens. There were about a dozen small houses on the estate and a little church—what Daudet called his “village.” Oh, what delightful summer days we have spent there, when a number of friends would happen in unexpectedly!

It was at such times that Madame Daudet—as skilful in all domestic concerns as in intellectual matters, admirable writer that she was—would improvise a little dinner, which, following upon the sunshiny beauty of the day, was to sustain eight or ten guests, or twenty or thirty.

I recall a certain exceptional Thursday, when there arrived by successive trains thirty of us from Paris. These, added to the people staying at the chateau and the Daudet family, made forty mouths to feed, and not a ripple appeared on the surface. Madame Daudet maintained her affable smile, her serene manner. I could not refrain from saying to her during dessert, “Nevertheless, I was curious to see how you would carry it through.”

“Well?”

“Well, I am in a state of stupefaction. They certainly must have had a pretty bad time of it for a while in the lower regions, but not a word, not a sign could be detected, and everything was on time.”

And now I have the melancholy knowledge that never again can I hope to discover the enthusiasm, the eager love of discussion, the ardent faith, which belonged to the generations preceding us. Then, too, if in our youth we are conscious of the places occupied by our friends we are hardly so of those which we hold ourselves. In our thoughts the “seniors” always remain the seniors, and we are unable to appreciate the pleasure of becoming seniors ourselves.

Hence the sorrow we always feel for friends and things we have lost, and hence our conviction that we shall never fill their places.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The Fox-Woman. By
John Luther Long.
With Frontispiece.

There was in far Japan, says Mr. Long, an Artist who adored Color; his name was Marushida. And it was his joy to sit and paint on vases of Satsuma the legends of Amaterasu, the sun-goddess, and of the Fox-Woman,—she

who, having no soul of her own, cannot reach Nirvana, unless she steals the soul of a man. Her he loved to draw; “because in secret he adored color, and he might put color into the face of the Fox-Woman and in her eyes and hair. . . . And he made her very beautiful—very! For the rest, he must remember that the Fox-Woman had no soul, that she smiled always, and that she must be splendid,—but, nevertheless, as brass and stone are splendid perhaps.” So lived Marushida, content with his painting, his friend Yasakuji, the ‘*riki*’-man, and with his morning-glories; and these last were first in his heart. Then came Jewel, the exquisite one; and she became his wife. So he was happy. But one day the Fox-Woman found him; the Fox-Woman herself,—A *Sei Yo Onna*—West-Ocean person; *Anglicé*, a blundering, heedless, American beauty. And she stole his soul. “And there was to be no more painting—nor any morning-glories—for Marushida.” So runs the beginning of Mr. Long’s tale.

One can see even in a hasty sketch the elements of poetry and tragedy. The portrayal of the gentle, dainty little Jap woman is Mr. Long’s *forte*, as is evidenced by the dainty fascination of *Miss Cherry-blossom of Tōkyō*, and the gentle pathos of *Madame Butterfly*, etc. The present tale has the peculiar charm of his previous work, *plus* a subtle something,—perhaps it is a reserve of pathos,—that gives it an atmosphere comparable in delicacy only to Marushida’s peerless morning-glories, or to Jewel herself. Certainly, Mr. Long has so far done no better work than the *Fox-Woman*, which points with peculiar aptness the statement of a contemporary critic, that our author “possesses the breadth and subtlety, the mingled strength and sweetness rarely met with save in writers of the very first class.”

The frontispiece is in the Japanese style, on Japanese paper; a dainty success—as dainty as the tale itself. And the cover, in crushed buckram, bears crimson and blue Japanese morning-glories around a sun-burst. Inside and out, the book is a triumph of the Lippincott press.

A Man: His Mark. By W. C. Morrow. With Frontispiece by Elenore Plaisted Abbott.

From a collection of horrible tales like *The Ape, the Idiot, and Other People*, or a live and clever sketch like *Bohemian Paris of To-day*, it is a far cry to such a romance as *A Man: His Mark*, Mr. Morrow’s latest work of fiction.

The situation is simple, yet most complex: Two persons—a man and a woman—are imprisoned by the snows of winter in a hut among the mountains of California. She has been injured by the accident that killed her father, and requires medical attention, which the

man is forced to supply. Their life for weeks drags itself out thus in a space of a few square feet. Few situations could be more simple in outline; few more rigidly complex in detail.

The interest of the tale is twofold: first, the picture of the winter of the great storms that swept the Pacific States; of the hut upon the shoulder of Mount Shasta, "the great father of the North"; of the furious wind driving down the cañon, and after it, the gray snow-cloud, and the pitiless snow,—falling silently, stealthily, inexorably, blotting out the ruins left by the mighty wind. In all this there is the interest that always appertains to a manifestation of Nature and her forces. But beyond this, and more than this, is the human interest; the presentation of the curious problem in psychology; the attrition of minds upon each other,—this is difficult and demands delicacy and insight, rather than—or supplementary to—power.

That Mr. Morrow has risen to the occasion goes almost without saying; his mastery of his art was too apparent in the diverse subjects of his former book to permit in our minds a doubt as to his ability to cope with any situation demanding either strength or delicacy—or both.

For the rest,—for this is but a tithe,—the book literally "must be read, to be appreciated." It is bound in cloth, with ornamental symbolic cover-design, and a frontispiece. Published by the J. B. Lippincott Company.



The Splendid Porsenna. By Mrs. Hugh Fraser. Illustrated.

It was only a daughter, unwilling, unloving, that was given to the Splendid Porsenna; only a sacrifice to the Mammon of Unrighteousness. Yet all came straight, as strong, true tales must. There was the Splendid Porsenna himself, and Honora Dering, who was married to him, much to the satisfaction of Lady Dering, her mother; and there was the memory of the father,—now dead many years,—"one of the many Englishmen who live abroad and exercise patriotism at a distance." To these must be added the Cousin Gerald, the detrimental lover, and a host of those Roman society people Marion Crawford—whose sister Mrs. Fraser is—has taught us to know. Here we have the *dramatis personæ*.

Mrs. Fraser's intimate knowledge of her subject is evident, even to the layman, and her treatment of her plot and characters shows the result of her life in the Eternal City. No work of fiction brings home to the reader with greater force the curious combination of mediævalism and modernity that underlies the Italian character and habit of mind. In treatment, the plot abounds with absorbing and dramatic detail. From the Lippincott Press. With eight full-page illustrations.



The Shadow of Quong Lung. By Dr. G. W. Doyle.

The reputation of the author of *The Taming of the Jungle*, which, issued in the Spring, brought him wide and immediate popularity, bids fair to be considerably increased by *The Shadow of Quong Lung*, his latest volume, published —like its predecessor—by the J. B. Lippincott Company.

Leaving for the time being—*only* for the time being, let us hope—his native jungle, Dr. Doyle explores the Chinese quarter of San Francisco, with some

startling results. We have all heard dimly of the Chinese slave-girls, it is true, but few of us know what is their actual condition. Again, the extent of the high-binder influence is seldom, if ever, accurately gauged by those who view the question from the outside. Only the Chinese themselves know, and they do not tell that,—or anything else, for that matter. It is almost inconceivable that the quiet and apparently inoffensive Chinese working hard in a Californian kitchen should be a member of a murderous high-binder society. Yet it is incontestably true that that same Chinese, or any Chinese, may be the perpetrator of crimes of all sorts, including murder.

This phase of our multifarious national life is the theme of Dr. Doyle's latest volume. As a resident of California, practicing his profession, he has had ample opportunity to observe these strange people, whose faces are to the most of us but irresponsive masks. It is not difficult to appreciate the value of his work, from the literary stand-point. From the stand-point of law and order, the conditions upon which he bases his tales merit close and searching investigation.

Though ordinary war-stories come and go, those by Mr. Altsheler retain a hold upon the reading public. So it was with *A Knight of Philadelphia* and *The Sun of Saratoga*; so it is destined to be with *The Last Rebel*, his latest production, from the Lippincott Press, as were the others.

The idea of the tale is curiously pathetic: a wandering hunter falls into the hands of an ex-soldier of the Confederacy, still (thirty years after the late unpleasantness) holding his post for the cause, which he by no means considers lost. The inherent chivalry of the best of our brothers in gray is well portrayed by the author. Incidentally there is a love story, of course;—what tale is complete without it?—but the main interest centers in the white-haired Colonel Hetherill and his small band of enthusiasts. The scene is indicated thus: "Take down the map of Kentucky, and you will see in the east a vast region, roughened over with dark scrawls meaning mountains through which no railroad comes, and few roads of any kind either. Add to it other large and similar portions of the map contiguous in Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee, and you have enough country to make a brave kingdom. . . . In this kingdom of mountain and wilderness I was lost, . . ."

A New Race Diplomatist. By Mrs. Jennie Bullard Waterbury. Illustrated.

The time has long gone past when diplomatists were regarded as "trained liars"; and yet, in some ways, the stigma still sticks, albeit unconsciously. Still, it cannot but be acknowledged that in the world of to-day the affairs of nation with nation are conducted more in accordance with strict business equity, and less upon the maxim that "language was given us to conceal our thoughts." That such is the case, is amply proved by the fact that a man like Lowell, to say nothing of his predecessors and successors, could serve faithfully as a diplomatist without in any way violating his private integrity. And it is to Lowell and his kind that the world is indebted for the beneficial change.

Such a diplomatist,—a true "new race diplomatist,"—is Stephen Markoe, the central figure of Mrs. Waterbury's novel, published by the Messrs. Lip-

pincott. To weave the social and diplomatic life of Washington, New York, and Paris into a tale which, while without sensational features, shall possess strength and interest sufficient to hold the reader to the end, was Mrs. Waterbury's task ; and she has done it well. To contrast Stephen Markoe, a self-made man, with Ferdinand Lamballe, hereditary nobleman of France ; to draw such diverse personalities as Kate Markoe, Jack Conway, Burgess, and Mariotti, to say nothing of the other characters ; to place them in an appropriate setting, working out a logical plot, with the detail that lends verisimilitude,—this also she has done, and done well. And not the least of the attractions of her work is the intense Americanism that breathes through it all, in just contrast to the spirit of the older civilizations.

The illustrations are five in number, from the hand of Edouard Cucuel, collaborator with W. C. Morrow in *Bohemian Paris of To-day*, noticed elsewhere in this issue.

A Spliced Yarn. By George Cupples. Ill-
lustrated.

distinctly an event. The fascination of the ever-changing sea has its hold upon all healthy minds. And if one may not see it and feel its salt breath, the next best thing is to read of it. No books in this line are more enjoyable than are *A Spliced Yarn* and *The Green Hand*, both by Mr. Cupples, and both published by the J. B. Lippincott Company. They are sold separately or together, as desired. Illustrations from original paintings by Frank Brangwyn.

Dickens's Christmas Stories. Five Volumes. Illustrated.

Being Selections from the entire Christmas Numbers of *Household Words* (1854 and 1856), and *All the Year Round* (1862, 1866, and 1867), by Charles Dickens and others. The volumes are five in number, containing "No Thoroughfare," "Mugby Junction," "The Seven Poor Travellers," "Somebody's Luggage," and the "Wreck of the Golden Mary."

This set of five volumes—Lippincott—is published in cloth and lamb-skin bindings. Frontispiece by A. Jules Goodman in each volume.

The Man and His Kingdom. By E. Phillips Oppenheim.

The latest of the Lippincott *Select Novels* is the *Man and his Kingdom*, an exciting narrative of one of those Spanish-American republics where revolutions come far more regularly than the crops, and battle, murder, and sudden death alternate in removing from human existence its dull monotony,—that human existence is also sometimes forcibly removed is but a detail. The country is charming, as Mr. Oppenheim describes it; but the inhabitants thereof—he does not specify its exact location—are a drawback to the perfect peace we have learned to regard as our prerogative. But he has written an interesting and exciting tale,—and what more does one ask? In both cloth and paper bindings.

A Queen of Atlantis.
By Frank Aubrey.
Illustrated.

Mr. Aubrey, author of *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado*, places the scene of his latest romance on an island—the lost Atlantis—in the Sargasso Sea. Four people, three men and one woman, all young, are deserted by the crew of their ship in the masses of sea-weed of the Sargasso Sea. They succeed in getting the ship out of the tangle of weed, and eventually find the island of Atlantis. Their adventures on this island and others in the vicinity form the theme of this book, —Lippincott,—in which the author displays the same skill that made *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado* so popular. Mr. Aubrey has been particularly happy in the selection of the scene of his plot, since the Sargasso Sea is practically unknown beyond its border, and hence may, for all we know, contain the lost Atlantis, and all manner of wonders. Certain it is that, if the Atlantis is above the water and is peopled to-day, her inhabitants must retain many of the secrets of nature anciently known to the wise of mankind. Taken all in all, *A Queen of Atlantis* is a singularly diverting romance of its type, and to be heartily commended to readers of such. Illustrated by D. Murray Smith.

Bimbi Stories for Children. By Ouida.

Though suited to children,—and many are the children who have rejoiced and sorrowed with the Dog of Flanders and his companions,—the Bimbi Stories are read with pleasure by children of larger—of the largest—growth. There are those who say that “Ouida” cannot write a novel. But she can write a short story, and a good one at that, which is all that is demanded of her here.

The series includes :

A Provence Rose.

The Nürnberg Stove.

The Child of Urbino and Meleagris Gallopavo.

Moufflou and Other Stories.

A Dog of Flanders.

In the Apple Country and Findelkind.

The Little Earl.

They are from the Lippincott Press, and are bound in ornamental cloth. Small quarto.

Lippincott's Popular Books for Boys. Illustrated.

The Lost Gold of the Montezumas. By W. O. Stoddard.

Trooper Ross, and Signal Butte. By General Charles King, U.S.A.

Captain Chap. By Frank R. Stockton.

Charlie Lucken. By H. C. Adams.

The Young Castellan. By George Manville Fenn.

The Black Tor. By George Manville Fenn.

The Mystery of the Island. By Henry Kingsley.

The Boy Wanderer. By Hector Malot.

Chumley's Post. By W. O. Stoddard.

The Oracle of Baal. By I. Provost Webster.

That the above list contains nothing of the “yellow-covered” variety, is apparent by a glance at the list of authors. Stockton, King, and Fenn are to-day—and so by right—among the most popular writers for boys. Nor does the fact that their works have a distinct literary merit detract in the least from the enjoyment of their readers.

Bound in ornamental cloth, the volumes are up to the Lippincott standard of typographical excellence.

The Young Master of Hyson Hall. By Frank R. Stockton. Illustrated.

Amid the great strides of the last generation, we of the present day are prone to lose sight of the commercial and social life of a few decades ago. We are to be congratulated, therefore, that the younger generation is to have presented to it such a picture of those times, as this given by Mr. Stockton in *The Young Master of Hyson Hall*, from the Lippincott Press. The scene—Hyson Hall—is laid in Pennsylvania, a little back from the Delaware River. A sunken wreck supposed to contain treasure, and the threatened foreclosure of a mortgage on Hyson Hall figure prominently in the tale; all this, to say nothing of the shot-gun which the Young Master wanted, and eventually obtained. Mr. Stockton is a past master in the art of writing books for boys, and the present volume is full of interest for juvenile readers.

My Lady Frivol. By Rosa Nouchette Carey. Illustrated.

Whosoever rejoices in a straight true story, rejoices doubly when a new tale by Rosa Nouchette Carey appears. And this is particularly so with the younger generation, for whom she has written so many charming, healthful volumes. In common with her other readers, we can say "the last is always the best." In such a case, *My Lady Frivol*—Lippincott—must be very good indeed; as it really is. There is not a more welcome addition to the private library for girls than is the present volume.

Miss Vanity. By Amy E. Blanchard. Illustrated.

Miss Vanity is the latest issue of the Blanchard Library, which now contains six volumes, among the best of the Lippincott books for girls. Miss Blanchard has evidently studied deeply the characters and manners of young people in their teens, and she enters with a peculiar zest into the spirit of girlhood, and purity of tone and reality of impression are among her leading traits. She is much to be congratulated, in that she has also succeeded in drawing a real live boy, just at the difficult age when his individuality is beginning to assert itself, and when the complexity of character makes him a stumbling-block to the majority of woman-writers. Besides this, the stories are clean and wholesome, with good honest sentiment in place of sentimentality, and with plots that stand examination even by critical readers. The books are to be recommended to girl readers.

The Brahmin's Treasure. By George A. Henty. Illustrated

Another "Henty book" is always welcomed by boyish readers, for whose delectation he has produced so many interesting volumes. In fact, Mr. Henty may be said to be to-day the most popular writer for boys,—by no means an unenviable distinction in these days, when juvenile literature has broken away from the inanities formerly its chief (and only) characteristic.

The plot is laid in London and Amsterdam. Time, the end of the Eighteenth Century. The interest of the tale centres about a diamond bracelet stolen from a Hindoo idol in India, which is the cause of the most exciting adventure. There

is a thread of love-story, of course,—but even the most manly boy secretly likes a bit of a love-story now and then, though he does not often own it, even to himself. From the Lippincott Press.

The Spy in the School.
By Andrew Home.
Illustrated.

Another good book for boys,—a tale of boarding-school life. There is a clever piece of mystery-drawing, in which stolen papers, a scoundrelly teacher, and hypnotism are mixed in such proportions as to insure a readable and exciting tale. And one must not forget *Jack Tibbits*; a better chum would be hard to find. *The Spy in the School*—Lippincott—is to be recommended to the healthy boy.

Pilgrim's Progress for the Young Folks. Ill-
lustrated by Barnard.

An edition of John Bunyan's wonderful allegory especially adapted for the use of children, being complete as the original text, with the exception of the dialogues in doctrine, which have been reverently excised; the result is a complete and connected narrative, which cannot but grow into the minds of its readers, and thus prepare them for an intelligent perusal of the complete work in their mature life. The edition—Lippincott—has been prepared to fill the demand for one that, while interesting children in Bunyan's fascinating narrative, should not weary them and breed in their minds for the book a distaste all but ineradicable in later years. The original book as a whole is anything but milk for babes; hence the excisions. The illustrations are by Barnard, and number one hundred. Quarto, cloth.

Bohemian Paris of To-day. By W. C. Mor-
row and Edouard Cu-
cuel. Illustrated by
Edouard Cucuel.

There be few who know Bohemian Paris; few indeed. For one must have lived there,—loved, hated, worked, played,—ay, starved there, to know thoroughly the Paris of the Moulin Rouge, the Chat Noir, le Boul' Mich', the Bal des Quat'z' Arts, and of Montmartre. Many are the queer little restaurants where students and artists get their meals; but these are unknown to even the greater part of Paris, and seldom indeed does the tourist stumble over them. Each has something of interest: The Café Procope, for instance, is over two centuries old. The life of the model is shown, too, from the stand-point of the artist, to whom she is neither more nor less than one of the tools of his profession. Yet her life is essentially human,—and pathetic.

This by the way, however. The collaborators of *Bohemian Paris* have prepared their work with the object of presenting to the interested public a truthful account of the student life of Paris. The students are the pets of that city, they tell us, and their escapades are overlooked, so long as they do not riot against the government. In return, they lend to the city a picturesqueness that no other enjoys. But the shield has another side: Bohemian Paris is not all light and laughter. It is hard work,—for none but hard workers can progress against such critics as Gérôme and a host of others, veritable incarnations of the French critical faculty,—it is stress of hope, of aspiration, of grinding poverty and cruel self-denial; and sometimes it ends in a cold garret and the pinched lines of starvation, or the dark Seine and the cold marble slab of the Morgue. Still Paris laughs.

But this is Paris, and this is life,—forced perhaps; nay, certainly,—but still, life. And those who do come through the ordeal are none the worse for it; rather are they as metal tried in the fire. Thus Paris trains her artists.

All these phases are treated by the authors with a wealth of detail, both of text and illustration, that presents the life in its true colors. Upon M. Cucuel's notes, based upon his actual experience as a student under the great Gérôme, and upon his drawings, taken from personal observation in the various places described, Mr. Morrow has exercised the art that has given his previous work such vogue. And to good purpose; for from his pen springs living, breathing Paris, for the delectation—and enlightenment—of his readers. For the rest, one must read the work, a sheer delight from cover to cover.

The make-up of the book, with its fine illustrations and ornamental cover, is worthy of its contents—a perfect product of the Lippincott Press.



"I would live in the country, but fate ties me to the town.

Flowers in the Pavé.
By Charles M. Skinner. Illustrated.

But do you realize how much country remains in town? What scope is had in glimpses out of the street?" So writes Mr. Skinner, in the first of his charming essays.

And he makes us see it for ourselves through his pen.

The love of nature is strong in most of us, even those who do not "hold communion with her visible form," and it is to that side of us that Mr. Skinner's essays appeal. For they are nature-books, true nature-books; books of the country, the woods, the sea, and the animals that live therein,—not forgetting the two-legged animals for whose use and behoof all this was created. But they are more even than that: how much more, no one can say except for himself; for such thoughts as Mr. Skinner suggests express themselves differently in different minds, and each must read them for himself.

"*Flowers in the Pavé*" is the first essay. Others are "*My Think Tree*," "*Animals*," "*In a Park*," "*Back Yard Gardens*," "*The Kindness of Nature*," etc. The illustrations are four,—photogravures. *Flowers in the Pavé* is bound in extra cloth, uniform with *Do-Nothing Days*, one of the most entertaining of Mr. Skinner's previous volumes, and is brought out by the Messrs. Lippincott.



In the pages of this book, says Dean Milman, "is gathered

Imitation of Christ.
Thomas à Kempis.
Illustrated.

and concentrated all that is elevating, passionate, profoundly pious in all the older mysteries. No book, after the Holy Scriptures, has been so often reprinted, none translated into so many languages, ancient and modern,—" And Dean Milman has not overstepped the truth, for it is incontrovertibly true that the "*Imitation*" has for centuries been the favorite devotional work of the Christian world.

With any of the three thousand (and over) editions published between 1470 and 1873, the present one will bear rigid comparison. In fact, it is the only one extant which fulfills all the following requirements:

That the translation should be good and trustworthy.

That it should be well printed.

That it should be of small size, easily carried in the pocket.

That it should be sufficiently durable to stand the wear of a lifetime without injury.

That it should be well and suitably illustrated.

All this has been accomplished by the publishers, by sparing neither trouble nor expense. The printing has been done on very thin Japanese vellum, which is practically indestructible, and is a fine specimen of work from the Chiswick Press: better guarantee of typographical excellence could not be given. The illustrations are reproduced from the paintings of great artists, and are also printed on vellum. The size is five and three-fourths by three and one-half inches, easily pocketable. In either cloth or vellum. Published by the J. B. Lippincott Company.



The True William Penn. By Sidney George Fisher. Illustrated.

To tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is Mr. Fisher's aim. With what success, readers of *The True George Washington* or *The True Benjamin Franklin* can judge from their experience with those works. Modern biographical methods find a true exponent in our author, and the enthusiastic welcome that greeted the former volumes of this series shows how much those methods are appreciated by the public. It is no longer sufficient for the would-be biographer to write his estimate of his subject. What we now desire to know is, what that subject did, and, if possible, what he himself thought of his life.

These things must be sought in a multitude of places, and through a bewildering diversity of "material" of all sorts. His social environment, his personality as expressed in his correspondence and in other indications, the average intellectual life of the times and of his locality;—all these must be searched for fragments of truth. It is not every one who can make such a search; nor is it every one who can piece such materials together into a more or less homogeneous whole, while to produce the whole undistorted by personal bias is indeed a task beyond the powers of most of even the best of us. The consensus of opinion among Mr. Fisher's readers—those, at least, whose knowledge renders them competent to judge—has received with great favor his previous volumes. The same success must be predicted for the present volume.

In cloth or half levant; or, in a set with the two previous volumes, bound in cloth. All these are published by the J. B. Lippincott Company.



Myths and Legends of Our New Possessions. By Charles M. Skinner. Illustrated.

It is always a pleasure to turn to one of Mr. Skinner's charming books. Doubly is it a pleasure to leave for a while the political wrangling anent our new possessions and their final disposition and to turn to this collection of their Myths and Legends, in which is seen the conglomeration of religion, superstition, and history common in some degree to all primitive peoples.

Primarily, one may say for Mr. Skinner that he has no theory of mythology to prove; he holds no brief for Max Müller, for Andrew Lang, or for anybody or anything—except the myths themselves. And in the collection and collating of these, paying heed only to their value and beauty as products of the primitive fancy gilding with pure imagination the natural surroundings, or of the primi-

tive mind struggling to formulate its conception of the Infinite without its comprehension, he finds the reward of the true artist. Consequently, above all, he is a poet,—as has been amply testified in his charming essays, and retains intact the unconsciously poetic atmosphere inherent to all myth.

As to the present collection, it may not be out of place to say that he finds in Hawaii an honorable and honored class whose employment it has been to preserve the native hero-tales and symbolic narratives. In the Spanish territories, however, the Church rooted out, or turned to her use, everything that disagreed with her own precepts, so that much primitive material has been lost or overlaid with monkish tradition and legend. He finds, of course, the same similarity in the legends of widely different localities that has struck all students of such tales. As he puts it: "Eden is in both hemispheres, Sodom has been destroyed on both continents. Helen is not alone of Troy, but of Molokai and California. Coming to a later time, we find our dear old Rip Van Winkle to be only the phantom of an earlier personage."—But it would be unjust to both the author and his readers to give extracts that can only mislead, despite one's best intentions.

Myths and Legends of Our New Possessions is uniform with *Myths and Legends beyond Our Borders*,—both from the Lippincott Press,—with which it is sold in sets, or singly, as desired.

Salons Colonial and Republican. By Anne H. Wharton. With Portraits.

By somewhat extending the period she has treated in former volumes, Miss Wharton carries us into the social life of the early days of the American Republic, of fresh and striking interest. She writes of A Colonial Salon, A Republican Court, A Great Social Leader, Social Life in the Federal City, Literature and Art in the Republic, A Nineteenth Century Salon, A Ball and a Mystery.

Of the genesis of the salon she writes: "For some cause unknown to the mind of man, but better understood by those feminine processes that are said to take the place of the reasoning faculty in the other sex, it has always been the ambition and delight of a certain class of superior women to rule and shine in a social atmosphere somewhat different from that of the conventional ball and dinner." From this definition as a basis,—it is in fact the first paragraph of her book,—Miss Wharton rebuilds for our interested attention those gatherings through which walked the greatest personages of our early history, her description instinct with the wealth of informing detail which renders all her works so charming to the reader.

Of particular interest,—though such comparisons are invidious,—is the temper of the social atmosphere, forecasting the political changes soon to come. The attempt to fix the (officially) social position of the President and his wife, and the usages by which they were to be governed in their intercourse with the world-at-large, is a case in point. The political contest between the Federalists and anti-Federalists went hand in hand with that between the old-world aristocracy of Washington and the new-world democracy of Jefferson.

The illustrations are numerous, reproductions of portraits and miniatures of men and women prominent at the time.

Salons Colonial and Republican is from the Lippincott Press, like *Heirlooms in Miniature*, with which it is sold in sets, in crushed buckram binding; or *Salons* may be had by itself, in either crushed buckram or half levant.

Popular British Ballads: Ancient and Modern. Chosen by R. Brimley Johnson. Illustrated by W. C. Cobbett Cooke. In Four Volumes.

Demanding no more of a ballad than that it shall be a simple spirited narrative, and guided by poetic intuition rather than by any academic definition that would unduly limit the ballad-class, Mr. Johnson presents four volumes, in which are collected the best of the old popular songs of the British peoples. "Moreover,"—he says,—"this is a collection of poems, not of archaeological specimens or verses on great historic events; and the ballads have been chosen according to my judgment of their artistic merits.

"Vols. I. and II. contain the best traditional ballads of England and Scotland, with a small group of Peasant Ballads still sung in country districts. Vols. III. and IV. contain selected modern experiments in the art of ballad-writing by English, Scotch, and Welsh poets, with a mixed group of Irish ballads; those on foreign or classical subjects being in each case excluded."

Realizing to the full the difficulties that beset the general reader in puzzling out ancient text and obsolete spellings, the Editor has prepared the text of the old ballads according to the best authorities, modernizing the spelling wherever necessary, but taking due care to preserve as much as possible the indefinable flavor of the original; the rhythm and accentuation are, of course, intact. Brief historical or explanatory notes are printed in the Table of Contents, and obsolete terms are explained in foot-notes.

Among the others we may note the ballads of the *Children in the Wood*; *Hugh of Lincoln*; *Adam Bell*, *Clym of the Clough*, and *Willyam of Cloudesle*; *The Nut-Brown Maid*; *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*; *Robin Hood's Death and Burial*, etc. In fact, this is in every way an extremely interesting and valuable collection of these poems, and we cannot but congratulate ourselves that so many of them have been published in accessible and readable form.

The illustrations are happy, in that they conform to the general flavor of the text. The volumes individually are of pocketable size, and the edition is in every way worthy of the Messrs. Lippincott, its publishers in America.

Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Edited, with notes and a memoir, by William Michael Rossetti.

In preparing this edition, Mr. Rossetti has collated the edition supervised by Mrs. Shelley with the original printed text of all the poems, except only the semi-private first *Epipsychedion*; taking into account also certain fragments of unprinted manuscript. In the Appendix are a number of juvenile writings obtained from various sources, some variations of the printed text of the poems, and other odds and ends. Consequently, the three volumes—Lippincott—contain the complete works of the poet. While recognizing the justice of the assertion, that the youthful mediocrity of any writer should be expeditiously forgotten in view of later and better work, Mr. Rossetti still adheres to his determination of printing anything he can find of Shelley's work, even such babbling incapacity as the poems of St. Irvyne, averring—and justly, as we think—that the contrast between the immature and the mature is so great, and so interesting, as to justify the comparison.

Beside the text, there is a preface by the Editor, prefaces by Mrs. Shelley to various editions, and a Memoir of Shelley, by the Editor. And there are notes to various poems by Shelley himself, by Mrs. Shelley, and by Mr. Rossetti. The

wealth of material presented in these volumes is representative of every phase of the poet's tragic life and still more tragic death. In his able presentation of that life, Mr. Rossetti makes himself the creditor in gratitude of all who, loving the poetry, are fain to love the memory of the man, mercifully forgetting and forgiving the errors of a life, in a narrative of which, concludes Mr. Rossetti: "He asks for no suppressions, he needs none, and from me he gets none. After everything has been stated, we find that the man Shelley was worthy to be the poet Shelley, and praise cannot reach higher than that; we find him to call forth the most eager and fervent homage, and to be one of the ultimate glories of our race and planet." As to whether or not these conclusions are just, must be judged from the Memoir itself.

Three volumes: with Portrait.

Persian Letters.
Montesquieu. Translated by John Davidson. Illustrated.

Whether considered solely as a composition by Montesquieu, or strictly upon their own merits, the *Persian Letters* have an attractiveness that is peculiarly their own. The development of the two characters—Rica and Usbek—under the influence of the Paris of the first decades of the eighteenth century; their gradual acceptance of the morals, manners, and religion by which they find themselves surrounded; and their inherent Orientalism, in regard to private affairs in their own country;—all the little contradictions between heredity and environment, in fact, arouse and hold our interest until the end.

Written in the form of a series of letters from Rica and Usbek, two young Persians residing in Paris in search of knowledge, with such answers as serve the better to fill in the thread of story outlined by the author, the book is filled with keen comment upon the society and history of his times. The comment is subtle always, caustic at such times as seem to demand sharp criticism, at others, a kindly admonition rather than a criticism. And all written in the charming style for which Montesquieu is famous.

It is much to be regretted that Montesquieu is so little known among readers of English. In fact, it has been more than a hundred years since any work of his was translated into our language. But the period of waiting was something worth, when it culminates in such a clear and lucid translation as this by Mr. Davidson. The original matter is left as Montesquieu wrote it, without prudish elisions.

The edition—Lippincott—is in three volumes, in cloth and half morocco bindings. Etched portrait and illustrations.

Homes and Haunts of the Pilgrim Fathers. By Alexander Mackenney, D.D. Illustrated.

No work of all time presents with such thoroughness and wealth of detail the European life of the Pilgrim Fathers. The author's purpose has been to present by means of a carefully planned series of illustrations, with appropriate text, the buildings, places, objects, and portraits indubitably associated with the life of the Pilgrim Fathers in England and Holland. For this purpose, he has been associated with Charles Whymple, who has reproduced, with the brush and pen, structures and objects of interest which it is practically certain that the Pilgrims must themselves have seen, and representations of the towns and villages where they are known to have resided,

and the buildings in which they are known to have worshipped. The local views are chosen mainly with reference to those features of landscape which are to-day much the same as they were in the seventeenth century.

We find interesting chapters on Gainsborough, William Brewster and the Church at Scrooby, Austerfield, the home of Governor Bradford, Myles Standish and the Standish Country, Boston, Plymouth, etc. The whole is illustrated by nearly one hundred full-page plates and detail drawings in the text, and by a colored frontispiece, a General View of Scrooby.

The edition is in large quarto, and is published in this country—limited to fifty copies—by the J. B. Lippincott Company. In cloth and ornamental cloth bindings.

Much Ado About Nothing. Vol. XII.
Variorum Edition.
By Horace Howard
Furness, Ph. D.,
LL.D., L.H.D., D. Lit.
(Cantab.)

Perhaps it will be sufficient if we say of the present volume, that it amply carries out the promise of its predecessors. Higher commendation—or more just—could not be accorded.

It is difficult to realize that nearly thirty years have passed since the first volume of the series was presented.

But so it was, for *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in 1871. Others followed at intervals, until eleven volumes had been published. Now comes *Much Ado About Nothing*, of which one may with justice repeat the appreciative criticism by the *Athenaeum* (No. 3185) anent *The Merchant of Venice*: "Like the previous volumes, this latest addition is a model of scholarship and sanity, the latter a rarer gift in the case of Shakespeare editors than the former."

It may not be out of place to call to mind the fact that, in Europe as in America, Dr. Furness's work is regarded as authoritative. "America has the honor,"—says *Blackwood's*—"of having produced the very best and most complete edition, so far as it has gone, of our great national poet. For text, illustration, commentary, and criticism it leaves nothing to be desired." And it is worthy of note that the degrees Ph. D. (Göttingen) and D. Lit. (Cantab.), the latter in 1899, were conferred upon Dr. Furness solely upon the ground of his services in Shakespearean study.

It is all but superfluous to say that this volume, like the others, comes from the Lippincott Press.

History of America before Columbus. By
P. De Roo.

The history of America before the landing of Columbus has ever been the *crux* of Americanists. Historians have written upon the subject, ethnologists have theorized, the whole field of science has been called into service to afford clues to the solution of this vexed problem. In such uncertainty, any authentic contribution to our scanty knowledge of the period antedating the voyage of Columbus, especially any work which will recite *facts*, ignoring as much as possible the theories, fanciful enough, with which history is filled, will be distinctly welcome.

Such a work, the first of its kind in general plan and in much of its subject-matter, is Mr. P. De Roo's *History of America before Columbus*, in which are collated documents from *codices hitherto unpublished*. These were consulted at the Vatican and other libraries in Rome; extracts have been made from forty-five

different manuscripts. Beside this, the works of two hundred and sixty learned authors have been consulted by Mr. De Roo in person. References at second-hand swell the list of authorities to over eight hundred.

With this mass of testimony at his disposal, Mr. De Roo has come to a number of important conclusions, among which one of the most remarkable is, that American Aborigines made several voyages of discovery to the *Old World*, both before and after the beginning of Christianity. He shows that most of the American aboriginal tribes were acquainted with the events related and the doctrines stated in the Bible; that several Gaspesian, Mexican, and Peruvian religious tenets and practices are in apparent if not in actual identity with those of modern Christianity; and that the "Sacraments" in Cuzco, Chiapa, and Tenochtitlan hardly differed from those of Christian Rome.

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The value of such a work can hardly be overestimated: to the historian and ethnologist it opens new fields by means of its hitherto unpublished documents; and to the general reader, especially to the Americanist, it supplies, in small compass, the most authentic information concerning the pre-Columbian history of our continent.

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